Kenneth Harri

# GLOBALIZING ISSUE NETWORKS & HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS:

## A Case Study on the Subordinate in Mumbai

University of Tampere

Department of Political Science and International Relations

HARRI, KENNETH: Globalizing Issue Networks & Hidden Transcripts: A Case Study on the Subordinate in Mumbai

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ABSTRACT

Civil society organizations are increasingly operating in the 'middle ground', attempting to incorporate the dominant elite and forces of globalization, and the radically local resistance of individuals and communities. This thesis is an attempt to further understand the dynamics of globalization and social change, from the vantage point of the most marginalized of the urban poor in Mumbai. It explores the mediating role of civil society and questions the participation of the subordinate in global governance structures through networks of globalization from below.

Using ethnographic case study methods, I generated data from unstructured focus-group interviews and through non-participant field methods targeting three marginalized slum communities in Mumbai which had recently experienced forced evictions. Utilizing general discourse analysis, in light of Scott's theory on domination and infrapolitics, I critically reviewed the role of the Alliance, a civil society organization in Mumbai, in advocating for the slum dwellers and facilitating their participation internationally through transnational issue networks such as Slum Dwellers International.

By looking at *everyday responses* to the work of the Alliance in the specific political context of Mumbai, I illustrate how the public display of associations does not take into account either sides hidden transcripts, or *driving motivations*. The hidden transcripts of the slum dwellers, coupled with opportunistic infrapolitcal resistance, will create a fissured subordinate voice in the international domain.

The participation of the subordinate at the global level through transnational issue networks involves increasingly contradictory stakeholders with inequalities in resources, power, knowledge, and mobility. All with different habits and practices, different goals, tactics and strategies for achieving one's own hidden transcript as well as the inclination to maintain the status quo. These institutions, corporations, media representatives, and governments will have differing ideas of institutional and social change, with disagreeing ideologies concerning class/caste, gender, advocacy, and how to achieve these. However, civil society organizations can potentially play a key mediating role in bringing the hidden transcripts of the subordinate and the elite closer together.

Key words: globalization, civil society, resistance, transnational issue networks, development

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

We are living in one of the most unstable and volatile times in our history, constantly facing both man made and natural threats. At the same time there is more dialogue than ever debating the nature and function of global structures, social justice and the meaning of sustainable development. Common citizens, policy makers and the academic community are increasingly demanding ways to include notions of inclusion, justice, equality, and fairness into our global system and institutions of global governance. Mitteleman writes:

> In this transformation, a vital issue is the matter of access. How can global governance be recast so that civil society may participate meaningfully in the steering processes and economic growth mechanisms of a powerful structure – globalization – that has the potential to deliver to the many – not merely the few – aggregate economic gains, technological advances, greater information, new knowledge, and an escape from long established forms of social control.' (Mittelman 2000: 248)

This thesis is an attempt to further understand the dynamics of globalization and social change, from the vantage point of the most marginalized of the urban poor. It explores the mediating role of civil society and questions the participation of the subordinate in global governance structures through networks of globalization from below. These globalizing issue networks are ever more fashionable and many development NGOs consider them as significantly increasing the agentic power of the marginalized.

The Alliance for example, is a group of civil society organizations in Mumbai dealing with urban poverty and marginalization that advocates a radical participatory ideology in which the urban poor intricately participate in policy formulation and urban planning. This strategy is then extended to facilitate the participation of the urban poor, not just locally, but internationally through SDI (Slum/Shack Dwellers International) – called grassroots globalization.

Throughout this thesis when discussing 'the Alliance' I am referring to three civil society organization: SPARC (Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres), NSDF (National Slum Dweller's Federation), and Mahila Milan (An organization of poor women in Mumbai), who together call themselves the Alliance. Very briefly SPARC is an NGO run by professionals and is concerned with urban poverty in Mumbai. NSDF is a much older grassroots, community based organization, and

Mahila Milan is concerned with women's issues relating to urban poverty. Its main focus is on local, self-organized savings schemes.

By looking at *everyday responses* to the work of the Alliance in the specific political context of Mumbai, I will attempt to show how the virtues of civil society are immensely complex due to elaborate, firmly established dominant – subordinate relations. The Alliance is an example of civil society organizations increasingly operating in the 'middle ground', attempting to incorporate the dominant and the subordinate - the dominant elite and forces of globalization, and the radically local resistance of individuals and communities. In effect the Alliance's work represents the coming together of these global and local dynamics comprising of the hidden transcripts of the elite in Mumbai and the slum dwellers, mixed with both parties public transcripts of how they want things to appear. I believe that by further understanding the effects of the interplay of these two transcripts it is possible to avoid some of the adverse consequences of many development initiatives and subsequently create better policies.

I question if there can be some kind of new design for global governance which mediates the dynamics of globalization, the powers of the dominant elite and the multifaceted resistance of local communities involved in their own infrapolitical struggles. This study is a critical review of some of the functions of the Alliance, and assumptions of subordinate participation that form the basis of many transnational strategies. I will illustrate how the specific locality of engagement between the Alliance and the slum dwellers, and therefore their assumptions, only represent the public display of associations and does not take into account either sides hidden transcripts, or *driving motivations*. I believe this creates a fissured, distorted representation of the marginalized voice at the international level. This is a massively complex issue and this thesis does not claim to address it in an all-inclusive manner or in exhaustive depth. However, it does attempt to shed some light on the paradoxes of emancipation in the context of the slum dwellers in Mumbai, and their bearing on relations of power.

Throughout the research process my concern has been the role civil society takes when viewed from the vantage point of the most marginalized. Yes, civil society does obtain different meanings in different contexts. Putnam for example used civil society to highlight the need for networks of solidarity among otherwise passive citizens - the need for social capital (Putnam 2002). I am dealing with its significance for developing third world societies, in contexts such as Mumbai, where in many

cases in order for marginalized communities to feature in the civil society argument at all, is for organizations like the Alliance to carve out a space for them (Mohapatra 2000: 7). The Alliance therefore acquires aspects of the political power of the individuals as well as the state, since it strives to perform some of its functions as well, and serves its interests.

In the case of the slum dwellers the usual argument of the significance of associational life, for example, becomes problematic as the state may refuse to recognise them completely, or individuals are simply unable to form associations. The control this gives civil society organizations that work to increase the agentic power of the poor should be critically reviewed as they are able to present the marginalized in a way they see fit, often fulfilling their aspirations. The presumption that they strive for the benefit of the poor, to me poses numerous questions even if they claim only to facilitate their participation, and advocate social change by the poor, for the poor (See also Mitlin 2001). This has an even greater importance at the international level when discussing the value of local participation.

Now, I realize that civil society can be explored from many angles. It is possible to attempt to locate it in history and reveal its changing meaning or analyse its coherence as a concept through the writings of its propagators. This is not the purpose of this paper - to delve the history of an idea like many inquiries of civil society do, but in my opinion more importantly, to further understand how the concept or idea of civil society is mobilized in particular contexts.

Civil society in contemporary literature in often depicted in a positive manner, celebrating its potential. Ferguson (1995) sees civil society as a sphere where the interests of the individual and that of society are reconciled. For Hegel (1991[1821]) it is a realm where interdependent individuals pursue their freedom. Cohen and Arato (1992) in turn advocate its function to self regulate activities and reform or transform the state. The way civil society is conceptualized in these arguments stress the theme of collective life or agency as being important. Therefore the issue of who represents who and how effectively becomes essential in this sphere. The initial assumption is that individuals are motivated by rational calculations and form associations in order to achieve their goals. Roughly speaking, these dense networks of associations can be considered a sign which contributes to a vibrant civil society. The more people engage in a rich associational life, the more likely they are to become active citizens.

I began to doubt some aspects of these arguments and their significance for debates on the international, after spending time in the field and seeing the real life-world of the slum/pavement dwellers in Mumbai. It seemed that there were limitations in typical conceptualizations of civil society when applied in that particular context. When so many individuals are unable, for a plethora of reasons, to engage in rich associational life to ensure that their interests are being counted as legitimate, how does this affect the positive link between civil society and associations? When the Alliance facilitates and fosters association through its community exchanges does this change the situation? If the only way these marginalized communities engage with the institutions of the state and other structures of authority, or any elements of the international for that matter, are via or with the help of organization such as the Alliance, to me civil society acquires a new meaning. On whose terms is representation acquired in this realm?

I must stress, however, that I do agree with many of the arguments put forward by the Alliance, such as the clear proven (see Mitlin 2001) limitations civil society organizations, and development NGOs in particular, engage in when they are unwilling to give decision making power directly to the community members. What concerns me is the assumption that the logics of the various strategies that have been successful in Mumbai, such as the idea of housing festivals and precedent setting, are similarly beneficial when transferred to the international domain.

It is important to keep in mind that the Alliance functions in India, in a society which has far reaching historical and cultural traditions of subordination established to the extent that one could say, institutionalised for appropriating labour, goods, and services. Caste subordination could be compared with forms of slavery, serfdom, and other extreme cases of dominate – subordinate relations. Of course this comparison is only in relation to structural similarities. Subordinate groups such as the slum/hutment communities have no political or civil rights and their status is dictated by birth, almost completely eliminating any social mobility. India prides itself as being a free democracy yet there is a fervent sense of ideological justification for the kind of domination and discrimination present. There are formal wide ranging assumptions about inferiority and superiority which is evident everywhere one goes. It materialises itself in certain rituals and etiquette which regulate all social encounters between castes. I believe this has important implications for the participation of the subordinate in the functioning of civil society organization.

Witnessing the forced evictions and demolitions of the slum dwellers I noticed that there was an element of personal fear in the community members that portrays the amount of power the dominant have. The bulldozers tearing into the flimsy shelters was just another manifestation of the relations between the polarized social strata. Other forms, which were also present during the demolitions, such as arbitrary beatings, insults, and various forms of public humiliation, are common. During my dialogues with the community members, especially the women, there was an underlying sense or knowledge of severe consequences if one did not comply with the demolition exercise.

On top of the material domination there are issues of dignity and autonomy which are simultaneously constantly being violated. I was struck by the amount of self control the community members had, standing by as their few possessions were vandalized and valuables stolen by the police. This compelled me to look closer at Scott's arguments of hidden transcripts. In ordinary circumstances the subordinate dare not contest the state of affairs, but behind the scenes they create a social space where they can voice their dissent towards the power relations. In other words they act out as they are expected to in a particular context, because it is in their benefit to do so.

Even at this early point I want to briefly introduce James Scott's idea of infrapolitical activities – of public and hidden transcripts which I will draw on in my analysis (Scott 1990). For the slum dwellers, the Alliance, and state authorities, civil society is a sphere which presents the limited public transcripts of political life, for both sides. Itself it does not say much about the motives with which individuals participate. By looking at the infrapolitical activities, the informal day to day subordinate – dominant relationships, I believe will give a fresh account of civil society in Mumbai.  People negotiate resources and values mostly in the informal realm of hidden transcripts which I believe, like Scott, is the source or foundation for political power which is only played out in public.

Public transcripts on the other hand are the verbal and non-verbal acts carried out by the dominant and the subordinate – their view of themselves and how they wish to be seen. For example the functions the alliance performs may only be possible at the consent of the state or dominant officials. The subordinate in turn *appear* to obey or comply with these stated or unstated expectations of the dominant by partaking in these functions. By means of surveillance structures the dominant record these activities that may challenge their preferred status, material position, or

ideological dominance. Therefore the view the subordinate and marginalized have of the Alliance and the individuals it employs, may change and evolve depending on the context. Real and perceived constraints and opportunities affect their behavior and the choices they make. The same line of argument can be applied to the state and global structures. Similarly the perception civil society (in this case the Alliance) has of the urban poor is politicized depending on the restrictions and opportunities imposed by their interests; the interests of state official it has formed alliances and partnerships with; expectations from the transnational network it is part of; from western donors etc.

There are many severe challenges I face in attempting to apply the notion of hidden transcripts to a context of emancipation, participation, and particularly when attempting to say anything meaningfully critical about their transformation to the international scene. How do I look at power relations when it is in the strategic self-interest of the subordinate to *act* in the presence of the powerful, and when the powerful in turn have an interest in over-dramatizing their image or reputation? There must be a evident purpose behind the displays of domination and consent. The oppressed may even benefit from conspiring to reinforce the hegemonic appearances (See Scott 1990: chapter 4). The personal testimonies and recollections of the slum communities provide me with some insight to the ideological resistance, which may evolve into opportunities or confrontations, hidden form the surveillance structures of the powerful. My fundamental curiosity is the significance, if any; these propositions have in situations where the Alliance is in social interaction with the subordinate, the slum dwellers. In the following chapter I will provide some background for the legitimacy of this enquiry.

## 1. 1. OVERVIEW

Many will agree with me that since 1989 neo-liberalism, or some variant of it, has accomplished some kind of world-wide victory. The United States through its global presence has been the primary driving force behind this.  The acceptance and openness to liberal market processes by other regimes with differing political and historical traditions has of course been important in allowing this consensus to form.

However, fifteen years after the fall of the Soviet Union global inequality has widened, international warfare has been taken over by civil warfare, and there are various forms of ethnic struggles continuously occurring throughout the world.  This plainly reveals the contradictions in the current global system which is attempting to achieve equity, peace, and development. However, the local struggles of civil society organizations incorporate many of the same contradiction as we will see.

I believe globalization does represent radical new opportunities. The increased flows of financial capital across national boundaries, innovations in communications technology and all the new opportunities for global civil society to mobilize have the potential to be channelled for common good.    Yet the massive paradoxes and contradictions have led many to doubt and have given rise to theories of the clash of civilizations (Huntington 1997), and the end of history (Fukuyama 1993), of global gaps between safe and unsafe physical zones and geographical spheres (Routledge 2001), and many others attempting to reveal the uneasiness of the whole global structure. To quote Rosenau:

> These polarities amount to an endless series of tensions in which the forces pressing for greater globalization and those inducing greater localization interactively play themselves out. Such dynamics can be discerned in the tensions between core and periphery, between national and transnational systems, between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, between cultures and sub cultures, between states and markets, between decentralization and centralization, between universalism and particularism, between pace and space, between self and other, between the distant and the proximate –  to note only the more conspicuous links.. (Rosenau 2002: 28)

It is safe to say that the defeat of the Soviet Union and the many significant advances in technological innovations have failed to bring global peace and equality. The Marxist vision of class struggles that would bring the transformation of elite politics by the will of the common people has also failed. Modernization and development, the most influential other grand vision which began with the Marshal Plan to rebuild Europe has not been able to live up to its expectations. Official development assistance, technical expertise and education, technology-transfer, and democracy, sometimes vigorously implemented have largely been unable to bring universal equity in standards of living. This vision has been thoroughly criticized and is not my intention to do so here.

Now, when going through development and International Relations literature there are all kinds of other visions of emancipation and equity each stressing differing factors. Some focus on cultural factors others on non-territorial aspects, bureaucracy, institutions, religion etc. What is important for this thesis is that almost all of these views recognize that non-governmental actors are essentially part of, and somehow

should be incorporated into new models of global governance and local democracy – providing legitimacy in their analysis.

Very roughly speaking among grassroots political movements there are two broad strategies for achieving this inclusion, recognition, and participation. Some choose armed, militarized solutions and others choose a politics of partnership between traditionally opposed groups, such as states, corporations, workers etc. The Alliance and the transnational network which it is part of has, "consciously decided for a strategy of partnerships with other powerful actors, such as the state, to achieve its goals of gain secure housing and urban infrastructure for the urban poor, in Mumbai, in India and beyond" (Appadurai 2000: 21).

Next I will state some of the assumptions which have steered my thoughts and will help identify this thesis within the broader framework of International Relations and the debate on the international. With regard to the nature of global governance I assume that there is a significant transformation in process, which is due to the rapid growth of NGO's of all kinds since the Second World War. This has been facilitated by the growth and expansion of the UN and other international institutions. The widespread approval and acceptance of the politics of human rights and related issues of accountability have played an important role making initiatives such as those of the Alliance possible. These advances in accepting participation have also provided the fundamental legitimacy to non-state actors.

More broadly the increase of non-governmental politics along with the innovations in information technology have made possible so called cross-border activism through transnational advocacy networks (See for example Keck & Sikkin 1998). These groups work together on a large, complex scale which is unique to this time. Generally speaking, they can be categorized into two groups: issue based, such as the environment and child labour, and in identity based, such as women's rights and indigenous cultures and poverty. I will go through in more detail the work of the Alliance and SDI and their cross border activism in urban poverty issues.

I also assume that the nation-state is undergoing many significant changes which largely facilitate the nature of the work of the Alliance in Mumbai (See for example Hall et al 2003; Rosenau et al 2005). The issue of governance is of particular relevance for me. In some cases non-state groups have forced government functions to become privatized and in other cases multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF have become so involved that some national economies are almost run by them. This externalization of state functions has often been part of the

neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes strongly encourages and partly forced by the agencies.

What this means is that more frequently NGO's and other citizen movements take the role of performing some aspects of state governance, which in turn creates alternative ways for the state to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the people. I agree with Rosenau that this process which is underway in many developing countries significantly contributes to the weakening of the nation-state.

In India in particular, there is also pressure on state governance from different forms of communal tensions. The legitimacy of the state is constantly being challenged by numerous forms of nationalism, ideological as well as territorial and fundamentalist. Of course various forms of other regional affiliations play their part as well (See Singh 2001). My point is that in this context the state governance arrangement uses alternative means of partnerships through NGO's and the like, to create legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. The Alliance is intricately involved in this.

Finally, many have argued that globalization is producing new forms of globally organized power within nation-states (See for example Castells 1999; Giddens 2000; Held 2002; Rosenau 2003). NGO's and other citizen groups take advantage of these opportunities to create space and voice for the marginalized such as the slum dwellers. The Alliance through SDI attempts to take this claim for space to the international domain. These are some of the assumptions which led me to pursue the argument in my thesis and I will further elaborate on these throughout the paper.

## 1. 2. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

In the following chapter I will briefly go through the constantly evolving debate on what counts as knowledge in IR. This will be followed by the methodological orientation of the thesis which can been seen as an ethnography of the process of data collection and methods used such as focus-group interviews and field methods, and of the numerous difficulties faced, ending with a few notes on ethical concerns. It will also provide personal motivation and reasons for pursuing this type of thesis which parts somewhat from traditional formats of Masters' thesis in International Relations.

Chapter three is an effort to chart some theoretical issues in the debate on globalization which will help understand the positioning of the Alliance and its efforts at the international level. These include participation, legitimating and governance more generally. I would like this to be seen as viewing such notions form the global level, which will then be followed by a look at important issues which function in the global middle ground, i.e. global civil society.

The final section in chapter 3 is devoted to relevant aspects of transnational advocacy networks, their conceptualization, characteristics, and functions. My intention is to provide the necessary theory on globalizing issue networks as well as the nature of the international exchanges the Alliance conducts, to allow a radical shift in perspective to the fundamental locality of resistance by the slum communities in Mumbai.

I hope these global issues will be kept in mind when contemplating my argument and analysis in the subsequent chapter, chapter four, since the intended critique of the work of the Alliance, and dominant – subordinate relations, often *forms the foundations of legitimacy at global forums.* Rather than being genuine, authentic views, I believe this international voice is a fissured, or tainted one, filled with complex priorities and motives. In the final concluding chapter I will return to note some of the implication of my findings on debates on the international.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

### 2. 1. KNOWLEDGE IN IR

### 2. 1. 1 The Great Debates

The discipline of International Relations (IR) was established primarily to deal with issues of war and peace, and how stability in the international system can be maintained. These large scale issues that the discipline sought to further understand drew clear boundaries between what was considered as being part of IR, and what counted as knowledge within the discipline. As the discipline grew after the world wars it is understandable that there was a growing interest in issues such as the causes of war and maintaining peace and stability. However, IR as a discipline has greatly evolved along with the changing world and there is a great contrast in what is considered as a legitimate concern for analysis in IR today than a few decades ago.

This evolving which has happened in IR is the result of three major painstaking debates, the great debates as they are called. The first debate was between the realists and the idealists and was focused on the issues of war and the possibilities of peace. The second debate was a debate on methodological approached, between the promoters of the necessity for rigorous scientific methods and the advocates of historical and philosophical approached to the study of IR. The third and most significant debate challenged the main paradigms of the discipline and opened up important new methodological possibilities and areas of concern. State, sovereignty, security, and war that were taken for granted in the first two debates were challenged.

The first debate between the idealists and the realists is said to have established the paradigms and the main concerns of IR. The idealists proposed a view of cooperation, progress, common humanity, democracy, and political freedom while the realists, crudely speaking, challenged the assumption that it is in the interest of states to cooperate and strive for peace. Rather, they claimed that it is in the interest of states to strive and expand their territories thus gaining more influence

and power. Both camps view states as governing their own territories leaving the international arena in anarchy. Citizens of states were seen as representatives, and there was a clear distinction between what occurred within the borders of states and outside, between domestic and international politics. (Nicholson 2002:15-18)

During the interwar period many idealist propositions became popular but were short lived because of the Second World War. Ideas that inclined states to cooperate in the international system quickly became unpopular and realism significantly grew in strength. The Realists stressed the state as the key actor that fundamentally strives to achieve its self interest. It is prone to dominate and control others in order to ensure its position within the anarchic system. According to one of the foremost Realist writers, Morgenthau, the state is inherently selfish and prone to seek dominance over others. This view that the sovereign state and man is in a war of all against all facilitates a conceptualization of states and societies through violence and war.

The first debate which I have briefly stated set the stage and boundaries of IR as a discipline. The state-centric paradigm was settled along with it the main questions and concepts such as sovereign states, anarchy, peace, war, and security. The discussion of whether states are prone to cooperate or be antagonistic within the anarchic international system continued in the second and third debates. (see Booth 1995)

The second debate is known for its fierce argument over methods and epistemology, between the traditionalists, who emphasized political philosophy and law, and the scientists, who wished to make IR more of a science through rigorous scientific methods derived from the natural sciences. The second debate also broadened the scope of major actors in the international area beyond solely nation states to include international institutions and organizations as well. The international political economy became important as well as notions of democratic peace through trade since countries that were economically interdependent would not wage war against each other.  The idea of democratic peace is still today the guiding principle of the governance of world politics. Rogue states and non-democratic, oppressive countries are often imposed with economic sanctions to force compliance. (see Held 2002)

The third debate, or the post-structuralist debate, is when the state-centric assumptions of IR were really challenged. It was said that as long as the international was viewed through state-centric lenses, patterns which do not fit into this are

effectively ignored resulting in exclusionary practices. These questions rose from issues which are influenced by, and influence the international such various relations of power within the nation-state and other forms of inclusion/exclusion as well as regional and ethnic conflicts which do not respect state boundaries as view by the dominant paradigms of IR.

The discursive practices of the discipline of international relations then determine what is excluded and what is considered to be IR. These practices are used to determine what the discipline is concerned with and what is researchable and in what method. I want to reflect on Elina Penttinen's reading of Foucault (1983), especially her discussion on subject positions to illustrate how in the discipline of IR the subject position is formed and effectively what counts as knowledge is determined.

## 2. 1. 2 What counts as knowledge?

The dominating discourses and its practices, establish that which is considered as truth as well as the methods by which this truth can be attained. Penttinen argues that the creation of subject positions within IR arises from the naming of individuals as subjects in the dominating discourse. However, these individuals also become subjectivated as the position of subjectivity allows also for agency and social recognition within the system of power. According to Foucault individuals become subjects through three different ways: naming of the subject through linguistics; dividing practices that categorize individuals through distinction between for example legal/ illegal, sane/insane, placing the subject in a specific position in relations of power; finally an individual turns him/herself into a subject through self-discipline and self-identification in order to gain social recognition and a position of agency within society. (Penttinen 2004: 16-18)

I have mentioned the founding concepts of IR, concerning relations of states and peace and war, which seem to have little to do with slum communities in Mumbai or development issues for that matter. As the discipline of IR is formed on the grounds of states as actors, it does not therefore seem to involve individuals of any kind, including marginalized communities. It is therefore no surprise that it is difficult to find IR literature that address and analyses issues covered in this thesis. Poverty and the hidden transcripts it creates is considered to be of no concern in IR.

However feminist writers of IR such as Enloe have shown how international relations exists in the everyday lives of men and women. The concept of actor in international politics has been challenged by these writers. They have shown how the private sphere which is typically excluded from mainstream IR in nevertheless impacted by the international. The feminists agenda in IR also concerned the methods of the discipline and knowledge. The shift in focus towards the powerless people in IR have brought forward marginalized women's voices and marginalized voices in general, and began rethinking how these can be accurately reflected in the discipline. I want to briefly reflect of feminist thinking in IR because many of their concerns are directly related to my thesis. (see also Holliday 2002)

During the third debate, where the state-centrism of IR was challenged more profoundly by seeing how the international was being formed outside, feminist writings became more widespread. The position of women and their struggles became acknowledged and accounted for; as long as this was an example of the complexities within the nation-state. This is an example of IR's refusal to see the possibilities feminist criticism provides for the understanding what international relations and world politics is, and what it can be. Who's voices matter in IR? (Penttinen 2004: 28-29)

Penttinen explains how Postmodern feminism offers significant alternatives to the understanding of what counts as IR, what the subject of IR is, how is it studied and written. Their focus is on how sexual specificity plays a role in the knowledge production in IR. The emphasis is on how the international, or world political, is enacted in the everyday lives of men and women. A point that cannot be emphasised enough is that the postmodern feminists propose ways of writing and theorizing that would not create new forms of exclusion and hierarchy. In other words, what is proposed is a way that would establish a position of speaking without categorically elimination others. Writing from multiple forms of registers means taking seriously the postmodern feminist claim that there are no coherent of essential identities therefore it is possible to write from the position of multiple selves. Although this move is mainly textual, it also has consequences on feminist political project since it brings attention to how identity politics are hierarchic and often a form of silencing of other voices. Postmodern feminists propose a means to undo exclusionary practices and include a multitude of voices, meaning also those that have been marginalized and deemed of lesser value.

Like Penttinen, I am in a way writing my thesis from the silent point of globalization that aims to grasp something of those, who are marginalized and excluded and whose voices cannot and will not be heard if the mainstream methods and paradigms of IR are kept in place.

## 2. 1. 3 Alternative approaches

The possibility of gathering objective knowledge of the world out there as well as the position of the researcher being a rational and neutral observer in relation to the collection and representation of date is challenged by the whole approach Penttinen takes. Knowledge is produced in openly situated and subjective situation that reveals the position the researcher is in. However, this will also allow the representation of the objects of research by undermining the relations of hierarchy of the researcher over the researched.

The empiricist and naturalist research methodology in IR in order to create objective and true knowledge has been often criticized. The empiricist believe that it is possible to acquire objective and true knowledge from the social world through positivist/empiricist methodology and that this knowledge could only be produced though empirical observable data. The researcher is distanced and separated from the data. Empirical data was also separated form theory. The researcher can then gather form this separated untouched natural law of international relations and politics objective universal knowledge.

I mentioned earlier how IR is sometimes considered as a form of exclusionary power that excludes voices and forms of expression outside the sphere of IR. Maintaining the boundaries of the discipline in place requires power. The boundaries have been challenged and are open to contestation so they have to be established time and again. The feminists and post-structuralists have done a lot to stretch the boundaries of IR so that the unsaid of IR has been highlighted and brought under critique and recognition.

The narrative turn which Penttinen also explores and uses, moves away from a singular monolithic conception of social science toward a pluralism that promotes multiple forms of representation and research. Away from facts and towards meanings; away form master narratives and toward local stories; away form idolizing categorical thought and abstracted theory and toward embracing the value of irony, emotionality and activism; away from assuming the posture of feeling, embodied and

vulnerable observer; from writing essays and toward telling stories. (Bochner 2001: 135 in Penttinen 42)

For Penttinen, the narratives she writes about are the stories of the people involved in sex traffic between Finland and Russia and how globalization is incorporated by the people involved in the sex industry. She explores what can be researchable in IR, what kinds of methods are used in IR and how the research is written. This does not imply abolishing traditional IR questions or methods, or claiming that traditional IR is useless.

Darby (2003) raises these similar issues and argues that IR has operated as a colonizing discipline that colonizes different forms of knowledge. Darby criticizes the practices of exclusion of knowledge in IR and lack of interdisciplinary research. He also mentions the closure from other disciplines of research such as development studies and postcolonial studies from mainstream IR throughout the IR debates. He also shows how the IR debates have been basically internal debates and the central paradigms, or what counts as knowledge in IR have never been open to debate.

IR has taken over the concept of the international and separated it from the ordinary and lived experience of people, who are nevertheless affected by and live the international.

## 2. 2. ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

The process of writing this thesis has been a long and arduous one. The initial idea of transnational civil society has been in my mind from the time I wrote my bachelors' thesis. Thereafter, many of my ideas have evolved and the entire research process has been extremely fluid.

I was born in Papua New-Guinea but have lived 15 years of my life in South Asia. I have had a rich and varied education including home schooling and a few years in International schools in Taiwan and India. This multicultural background and life experience has no doubt influenced my choice in pursuing my thesis on international issues effecting developing countries and the marginalized in particular. Having been exposed to different cultures and development issues throughout my life and seeing first hand many of the consequences of the issues covered will be evident throughout the paper. Therefore my challenge has been to acquire the

necessary objectivity - to focus on evidence and analysis rather than rhetoric and personal feelings. To at least some extent I hope I have been able to achieve this.

During my university studies I did an internship for an International development organization in India and had the opportunity to return and work for them later enabling me to gather data for this thesis. Most of the data used was collected throughout this six month period in Mumbai. The organization I worked for has various differing programmes in India but in Mumbai the focus was on slum/shack dwellers and issues relating to urban poverty. Working in this context, in partnership with local civil society organizations, I had a unique opportunity to utilize the local employees in gaining access to the slum communities and overcome many of the challenges imposed by language and cultural obstacles. The employees have been working in the slum communities for a few years and are widely respected and trusted. My fluency in Hindi enabled me to run the actual dialogue when conducting open ended focus group interviews in many situations, but as many of the slum communities have migrated from regions where Hindi in not spoken it was vital that I was able to gather data together with the local programme worker who had knowledge of these languages.

During the first two months of my time in India the government of Maharashtra initiated a campaign to clear the city of illegal slums and hutments residing on pavements belonging to the public. Witnessing the large scale demolitions and evictions led me to focus in my interviews on the slum community's reactions to the demolitions and the role civil society plays. Demolitions are common in many developing countries with rapid urbanization and SDI organizes international community exchanges to tackle specifically this issue of illegal evictions.

My choice to focus on the demolitions was partly opportunistic and partly because it appeared at the time to represent the extremity, or the stretching of the civil society argument and the complex contradictions in Mumbai. By gaining insight to the individuals' responses to the evictions I set out to problematize the multifaceted role civil society organization play. In this context, and from this point of view, the whole conceptualization of civil society and its virtues seemed in doubt. Due to the limited amount of land available for housing construction the overarching issue of shelter inevitably becomes the most disputed and controversial topic in the political landscape of Mumbai. Since its main objective is to obtain secure housing

for the slum communities SPARC plays an important role and was the logical focus of my research.

This investigation is based on the case study method. My rational for choosing the case study method with its limitations was the strong presence of the fluid real life context in which the events took place, which to me cannot be separated from the theoretical assumptions I had. By case study I imply an "empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within it real-life context" (Yin 2003: 3). This is especially true in the case of the slum/shack dwellers since the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Rather, they are essentially part of each other. Since there are obviously many more variables of interest than there could be data points the other benefit of the case study inquiry is the necessity to rely on multiple sources of evidence. As the case study methodology states, I used prior developments of theoretical propositions to guide my collection of data and analysis.

In relation to external validity – the domain to which the findings may be generalized, I feel that the single case study such as this one is weak to generalize and would require the use of various methods of replication to determine weather the findings reflect those of other situations. Even though I utilized three different sites they were all embedded in a distinct cultural setting. This does not make the findings of this thesis any less significant to the meaning of globalizing civil society networks for the urban slum communities in Mumbai, and their particular context. The generalizations I make regarding the global structures of participation serve more to initiate the direction of future inquiries and discussions on the international which I feel are important.

Another requirement to enhance the soundness of the case study method is to establish reliability by demonstrating that the operations of the study, such as data collection procedures, can be repeated with the same results. For this case study I created a documentation database which comprised of the interviews – protocols, as well as audio and video recordings, all newspaper clippings, and thorough references of secondary sources such as documentations by SPARC employees published in various journals.

I do want to stress the fact that this thesis does not claim to be a comprehensive study of the slum dwellers and civil society in Mumbai. The case of the slum dwellers is taken in a context which helps to meaningfully explore the role of civil society and the effects of networks of globalization from below.

Like most dialogues the interviews are only suggestive and I realize that they are inconclusive, but they do help support my argument and therefore serve their purpose. They are also coloured and shaped by an ongoing engagement with the present and the slum communities continuing struggle with daily threats. A case study such as this is deliberately open ended to recognize the fluidity of the situation.

The rational for this being an embedded case study is that the case of the slum dwellers in Mumbai represents a unique or extreme context for an inquiry of civil society stretching its logical argument.

I have used three main sources of evidence. Documentation – both documents from the SPARC website as well as articles in academic journal written by SPARC employees, and newspaper articles surrounding the demolitions in the Times of India, Mumbai edition. The interviews with the slum dwellers are obviously the single most challenging source of empirical data and I will go through that procedure and issues I came across separately. I also had the opportunity to make numerous direct observations in the slum communities though field visits, photos, video footage and in work related contexts.

Like most qualitative research I needed permission to access the slum communities in order to be able to conduct the interviews as well as act as a passive observer (See Silverman 2004). As mentioned earlier the fact that I was employed as an assistant project coordinator for an NGO working among the slum dwellers helped in many regards. The community members were accustomed to my presence in the slums and many considered the work we were engaged in as beneficial to the community (such as our run pre-school and health camps).

I also had access to a gatekeeper, someone with an official or unofficial role at the site. These were local committee members who arranged permission from other significant community members who might not be as enthusiastic about 'outsiders' spending considerable time in the slums. The local project worker who has engaged with the slum communities for a number of years in turn helped to gain the support of the committee members for the purpose of the research. Together we thoroughly explained a number of issues Bogdan & Biklen (1998) have identified as being important such as; why their particular community was chosen; what is required of them and other participants in terms of time and resources; the potential of our presence to cause tensions or disruptions; how the results of the research will be used and for what purposes; and finally we explained what the community members would gain by the study.

This final point was particularly sensitive since individuals at times expected financial rewards for cooperating simply because I was a foreigner. Others felt that outsiders come and wish to benefit by 'exploiting' their poverty for personal gains such as data for research, and they never see any change or positive impact in their communities. Again I want to point out how significant it was that we were able to show evidence of already having done something (through the NGO) for the benefit of the community and use this to persuade and convince them of the usefulness of participating in the interviews. It was particularly difficult to convince women to give up some of their time since they had to take care of children and run the household etc.

In order to generate data which would be useful and best help me understand the central phenomenon it was necessary to follow guidelines given in qualitative research writings on purposeful sampling (See for example Silverman 2005; Holliday; 2002; Krueger 2000). I chose the three different slum communities since they where so called 'information rich'.  To various degrees they had all been victims of the demolitions and have had to move locations several times. All three were relatively less well off than many of the older, more established slum communities in Mumbai. Purposeful sampling includes the individuals that are to be interviewed as well as the sites. All three interviews were focus group interviews which I will talk more about later. They comprised of groups with both men and women ranging from 4 – 8 individuals. I decided that the final group be made up of women only due to the difficulties in the earlier group interview of the women not being able to share their experiences openly in the presence of the men.

It could be said that the purposeful sampling was a combination of extreme case, homogenous, and critical sampling. Extreme as the case is one that displays extreme characteristics for a critical analysis of civil society. Homogenous since all three sites were chosen base on what they had in common, they all have membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics. In a way these slum communities were also exceptional cases through which I could learn much about the phenomenon – critical sampling. I was confined to three different sites because they were 2-3 hours from were we were residing and the addition of any new ones would have affected my overall ability to provide in-depth accounts and pictures. In a case study however, three different cases is sufficient.

## 2. 2. 1. Field Methods

Gathering first-hand information by observing individuals, groups, and events at the research sites was challenging, to say the least. I used very open unstructured forms for field notes and reflections since my main data was to be generated from the open ended interviews. However, this was very important in helping me identify what to focus on in the actual interviews and to see first hand points to analyse in my argument. These are some of the benefits of observations and field methods – being able to record information as it occurs in a setting and to observe actual behaviour (See Alasuutari 1995; Silverman 2004). I thought about relying further on observations but decided against it because I felt that in order to overcome my 'outsider' status would have required much more time than I had.

In addition the communities are unaccustomed to formal research and I was unable to spend the necessary extra time in the communities on top of time I spent as an NGO employee. Working in the communities did give me an 'insider' perspective to many of the issues facing the community members and I highly recommend utilising this as part of a research strategy. Before beginning the interviews I worked for four months among the communities and on surrounding development issues. By that time I had a clear picture of what I hoped to achieve by the study and how it could be successful and useful.

My role therefore was more of a non-participant observer rather than a participant one, even though I did 'participate' as part of my job description in some activities in the communities. Taken the nature of the circumstances, working as a foreign project coordinator, I would be partially removed from the actual experience no matter what I did. It was therefore necessary to arrange situations were the individuals would be able to express their views were I had some control, although limited, of the direction of the dialogue.

Participant or non-participant, I did engage in a process of observing so I will describe some general points that were of importance (See Silverman 2005). After the initial entering into the communities I only made brief mental and written notes since there were so many activities constantly taking place. By being able to slowly build relations with the communities it was easier for me to handle the amount of information and gain acceptance. The gatekeepers at the communities, the committee members mentioned earlier, provided essential guidance in helping determine what was important – history of the community, individuals, clashes with

authorities, experiences, people to talk to etc. It was also necessary to use a broad to narrow strategy, beginning with general observations of the overall landscape and situation, followed by observations of more specific activities that might be useful in providing insight. Information gathered at this stage comprised of portraits, occupations and modes of livelihood, general physical description of the communities and activities. Therefore data was generated both in descriptive field notes and reflective field notes where I included personal thoughts, hunches, or broad ideas which emerged.

Field notes gathers during the period of observing and participating as an NGO employee was key in determining the interviewees. Typically, influential persons were suggested to be interviewed and many found it difficult to understand my wish to interview women and subordinate members of the slum communities. This was of course to give voice and hear the stories of those least capable of doing so on their own. At one of the interview sites however, I deliberately comprised the focus group so as to include prominent and influential, politically minded individuals providing an opportunity to compare results from data at different sites.

## 2. 2. 2. Focus Group Interviews

In open ended interviews the primary purpose is to generate dialogue from the community member's point of view (Krueger 2000; Silverman 2005); Holliday 2002). This was achieved by asking a small number of very broad open ended questions (see appendix 1. for interview protocol used) were the participants would be best able to voice their experiences unconstrained. It was evident at times that dominant individuals would express their concerns first, affecting subsequent reflections of other weaker individuals. There was a strong communal mentality and differing opinions or challenges were seen as threats. To overcome this, together with the local NGO employee we made practical interventions and sought to determine the order of dialogue wherever possible.

Obviously there are advantages and disadvantages in using unstructured interviews (Silverman 2005). They do provide useful information in situations such as mine where it is impossible to only observe the participants in a way which would not affect their behaviour. There is also much more control over what kind of information is being created and it is possible to pick specific points for further elaboration. A clear disadvantage is the fact that much of the information is being 'filtered' through

the views of the interviewers. This is an inevitable factor that must be taken into account. I have strived to include longer extracts from the transcribed dialogues in my concluding report to avoid only summarizing the views of the participants.

To minimize the tendency of the interviewees to give answers and descriptions of events that they felt I wished to hear, we used additional probes and follow-up questions and thoroughly explained our intentions and expectations before the interview. This was useful not only for ethical reasons but to differentiate from other questions which they have encountered that serve only to legitimize some form of political agenda. It was fundamental to clarify that there was no right or wrong answer and that their anonymity would be secured. No doubt our presence effected answers given to some extent, more in the nature of the expressions rather than content. Some responses were not clear, perceptive or articulate, but this was exactly the purpose of the interaction. Directly acquiring any hidden transcripts that might be present would not have been possible. Therefore any reactions, hints, gestures were of importance especially with my presence since I may represent the 'dominant' to many of the participants.

In addition to these issues there were some difficulties with the equipment that was used. Initially the video recorder refused to take footage due to the extreme conditions of dust and humidity. However it did capture the more important dialogue and began working halfway through the first group interview. I decided to record the interviews by video instead of just relying on a tape recorder since I felt that there might be useful information in facial expressions, gestures, poses etc which would be missed transcribing only form tape recordings.

Balancing these numerous issues proved to be a real challenge. At the first interview site the room which was to be organized was not available the day of the interview and we had to rely on one of the participants who allowed us to gather in her home. This particular slum community was situated alongside a busy highway forcing intrusive noise levels into the recordings. Also it was difficult to stop children from entering and leaving the interview room. These were practical issues that required us, the interviewers, to keep the situation under our control. Using icebreakers to encourage individuals to talk, handling emotional outbreaks of various sorts, and remembering to say as little as possible to avoid influencing responses was testing (Holliday 2002).

Using focus group interviews with 4-6 participants was functional in creating informative data especially when individuals interacted among each other (For a practical guide on focus group interviews see Krueger 2000). Individuals were generally cooperative with each other largely due to their similar circumstances and life-world. There were a number of advantageous reasons for conducting the interviews in focus groups. I assumed that individuals would be even more reluctant to provide information in one-on-one interviews from past experiences in work related contexts. Cultural factors were important as well.

It would have been inappropriate in India for me to interview the women one-on-one, and I wished to hear the recollections of the women especially. Another factor mentioned earlier was difficulties with language. Having to interview together with the local project employee with knowledge of various local dialects made it practically impossible for me to interview one-on-one. His presence in these situations would have defeated the purpose.

A significant disadvantage of group interviews was the difficulty distinguishing individual voices in the group while transcribing. I was fortunate to find someone to transcribe the footage who had knowledge of the languages used in the interviews. For the ethnic group that had migrated from Andra Pradesh in South India I had to find other someone else who understood that particular language. Another disadvantage of group interviews was the difficulty of taking notes and making reflections during the interviews with so much happening at once requiring control.

The analysis of the data collected through these interviews falls within the scope of general discourse analysis since my concern is of broader social activities such as resistance and domination. These are conventional social science concerns, thus utilising discourse analysis was useful. The data generated was also not sufficiently precise to be able to use conversation analysis. However, discourse analysis made it possible to look at naturally occurring talk embedded in the prevailing subordinate – dominant social structures. This served my purpose.

## 2. 2. 3. Ethical Issues

To conclude I want to mention a few ethical issues that are of particular importance. Whenever interviewing with the intent of developing a deep understanding of an individuals or communities experiences requires asking highly personal questions and the use of intrusive probes. Obviously one of the most important issues is to

assure the anonymity of the participants (Mauther Eds. 2000: 12). In the transcriptions as well as analysis and reporting I used either aliases or simple numbering such as 'person 1'. I also strived to present composite pictures of the communities or groups of people rather than focusing on any single individual. As mentioned earlier the participants were thoroughly informed beforehand of the intention of the study and how their responses were to be used.

I personally decided not to express my own views at any time, to keep a certain distance as well as to minimize the chance of influencing the responses. These were important issues since some responses were likely to include information about various illegal activities accruing in the slums. Information on officials accepting bribes and their involvement in extortion and blackmail as well as information on the functions of the criminal underworld had to be dealt with (See Mauther Eds. 2000). Finally, my personal conduct needed to respect the research sites and minimise any negative impact and disruptions my presence could have. I also had to refrain from taking sides or using examples that might reflect badly on someone else, for example other NGO workers in the slum communities.

# 3. THEORY – Participation in Global Governance

## 3. 1. GLOBALIZATION

### 3. 1. 1. Overview

In simple terms globalization is used to capture the growing intensity of international flows and patterns of social interaction. It describes the speeding up, deepening and growing magnitude of cross boarder activity. How distant communities of human organization are linked across the world. How power relations reach distant places with often disastrous consequences. This growing awareness of interconnectedness, in turn, feeds reactionary politics and motivates new conflicts. Globalization is one of the most important topics of today as the majority of the world's people feel that they are largely being excluded from its benefits.

In recent years the term globalization has received plenty of attention from the media but it has also created fascination and vast amounts of literature in academic circles. There is apparently no clear way of doing things, in its conceptualisation, causal dynamics, social-economic consequences, implications for state power or the direction we are going in. There seems to be no single coherent theory due to the sheer magnitude and scope of the term, although attempts have been made (cf. Mittelman 2000; Held et al 1999).

Held uses two simplified groupings, the globalists and the sceptics, which encompass many different arguments and opinions, but I think is still useful in providing a general overview. The globalists can be seen as those who consider contemporary globalization a being a real and profoundly transformative process while the sceptics would argue that this view is highly exaggerated and does not confront the real forces shaping societies and politics today. (See e.g. Held & McGrew 2002)

There are two main general categories of globalization. The first focuses on the increases in interconnections and interdependence, a rise in transnational flows to an extent that the world is becoming single place and barriers between countries are disappearing through increases in political, economic and social interaction. This

view does not say much about the character of social relations or about contestations, hierarchies, and power relation that are of interest to this thesis. The second category emphasizes the compression of time and space. In other words local events are shaped by events happening far away and vise versa – as we have briefly mentioned earlier. Mittelman proposes his concept of globalization which captures some of the tensions faced by local communities such as the slum dwellers in Mumbai.

> As experienced from below, the dominant form of globalization means a historical transformation: in the economy, of livelihoods, and modes of existence; in politics, a loss in the degree of control exercised locally – for some, however little to begin with – such that the locus of power gradually shifts in varying proportions above and below the territorial state; and in culture, a devaluation of a collectivity's achievements or perceptions of them. This structure, in turn, may engender either accommodation or resistance. (Mittelman 2002: 6)

Another interesting approach to globalization is to look at the polarizations which arise from fragmentation and integration – fragmegration.  James N. Rosenau argues that it is important to stress the interactive function of these kinds of polarities, not just to focus on the globalizing dynamics or just the localizing dynamics because one might miss seeing the actually causes. He uses the term fragmegration to bring out the processes of fragmentation and integration occurring within and among organizations, communities, countries, regions and transnational systems increasingly, so that it is becoming impossible to look at them separately. 'Power is too disaggregated, and feedback loops are too pervasive, to assert that global affairs are now drive by the United States, or by globalization, or by capitalism… no…the emergent epoch consists of complex dynamics that spring from sources that cannot be traced to a singular origin' (Rosenau 2002: 29).

Since these tensions Rousenau speaks of, occur at every level they are central to my concerns as well. As Roseau puts it 'in a decentralizing global system undergoing continual processes wherein authority is undermined and relocated, how can publics be mobilized and problems addressed?' (Rosenau 2002: 30).


## 3. 1. 2. Globalists

For the globalists globalization is much more, even though it may support the interests of the powerful. Many argue that the world is experiencing significant structural changes. Castells stresses the contraction of space and time, and argues that networks and systems are being created at a global level which is distinct from the ones at the regional and local levels (Castells 1996). What is important is how

different systems and patterns of global interconnectedness are organized and reproduced, their different geographies and changes in power relations. This is particularly relevant to my concerns of the internationalization of the work of the Alliance. Central to globalist views is global change in the structure and principles which organize social and political life in the world order. Held identifies three different aspects: transformation in traditional patterns of socio-economic organization, of the territorial principle and of power (Held & McGrew 2002: 7). The removal of constraints of time and space makes possible new modes of transnational social organization. Local communities become vulnerable to changes far away and the relationship between socio-economic and political space is evolving. Territory and space are important but through globalization they are reinvented and reconfigured, they cannot be understood by simple focusing on the state (Castells 1996).

### 3. 1. 3. Sceptics

Hirst and Thompson, for example, are doubtful of the very concept of globalization. It seems nothing more than another word for Westernization or Americanization because it is not really 'global' and cannot be applied universally. Globalization was initiated by people who wanted to describe and explain what was happening but also to praise it and encourage more of it because it is a good thing and ultimately unavoidable as nation-states simply cannot contain capitalism and the free market economic system any longer. Along this line of argument globalization was created by strong neo-liberals. (cf. Hirst & Thompson 1996)

Globalization is also approached through imperialism. It is interesting when speaking in terms of the world economy how the use of the term imperialism has largely given way to globalization. Kitching questions why intellectual representations and interpretations of the world change. When moving from imperialism to globalization obviously does not mean moving from a world of exploitation and inequality to one of mutualism and equality. What then is happening? Kitching argues the world is instead getting more unequal and the patterns of inequality are becoming more complex. (Kitching 2001: 175-90)

Rather than globalization, many use words like 'internationalization' or 'regionalization' and view the phenomena as a growing increase in links between national economies or societies and the geographical bunching together of cross boarder activities. Many such as Hoogvelt argue that the idea of globalization is used

to justify and legitimize the neo-liberal project - the creation of a global free market. It is argued that imperialism has today acquired a new form through multilateral control and surveillance through institutions such as the IMF and Word Bank. Since the current world order is mostly made up of the major economic and military powers and their agents, the argument is that they must prefer the current state of economic and political relations since they are persistent. It is also argued that without the exercise of American hegemony the increase in interdependence cannot be sustained. (Held & McGrew 2002: 3-5)

## 3. 2. GOVERNANCE

### 3. 2. 1. The International system

After the cold war Liberal economic ideology has become nearly universal and accepted. It has been the driving force in the policies of the major ordering institutions – the G7, IMF and World Bank. After the end of the cold war there has also been a clear increase in levels of inequality, nationally, internationally - both in the material sense as well as the socio-political, between the third world and the first world. 'Growing inequality is arguably now the most significant global fought line' (Thomas 2002: 72). [1]

The academic community and the global governance institutions were excited after the cold war. Many assumed that finally global economic integration will be able to provide material benefits to all. 10 years later there are passionate debates on the principles, practices, and outcomes of global integration. Non-governmental organizations advocated for change throughout the 80's and 90's. The difference is

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[1] In the developing world almost 30 000 children under five die every day from preventable diseases which have been eliminated from the west (Human Development Report 2001). It is estimated that the cost for providing basic health care for all those who are currently deprived of it would be around 13 billion dollars. This is 4 billion less than Europeans and Japanese spend annually on pet food (Thomas 2000 in Held & McGrew 2002: 77). Then there are the common statistics: the average world per capita income for the 900 million in the rich regions is around 27, 450 dollars while being 3, 890 dollars for 5.1 billion people in the poorer regions (World Bank 2001). Even so, in a recent study the World Bank comes to the conclusion that globalization is reducing poverty. Numerous critics have scrutinized the many great methodological problems with the World Banks statistics and argue that they are far from providing a complete picture. These critics point to growing evidence that quite the opposite is happening. The argument goes that the measures that make the World Bank poverty figures fall, will probably lead to an increase in poverty (among numerous others see for example Tammilehto 2003: 19-23, 61).

that today there is increasing scepticism about the merits of free trade inside the governing institutions themselves.

In order to better understand the developments of inequality and for IR to be able to keep up with issues on the ground Thomas calls for a bridging with scholars who can help in understanding the outcomes of global economic integration for human beings. (Thomas 2002: 87).

## 3. 2. 2. Participation

It is widely accepted that global economic and political institutions need reform and require the integration of citizens into the decision making processes. I was hopeful to find there are current efforts at change. It appears to be happening, although slowly, and still biased towards the interests of the wealthy, their governments, businesses, and people. Helleiner points to this political change. The G-7, the OECD, the northern civil society, and the G-77, and UN are all moving towards greater transparency, accountability, democratic representation, and prime concern for sustainable human development … [all] the world lacks is  political leadership of the required political vision'.

Not very encouraging since the need for a strong political leader would mean in practise that too much would rely on the US. A clear economic and political might, with little interest in multilateral organizations if they do not serve its interests. It is the weakest performer in official aid as a percentage of its GDP. It has also failed to ratify some of the most important international conventions relating to the worlds poor: the rights of a child; economic, cultural, civil rights; discrimination against women; forced labour; freedom for collective bargaining; and land mines. (Helleiner 2001: 60-1)

Helleiner article questions if the global economy and its governance can even be expected to become more 'civilized'? Precisely what SDI hopes to achieve. He argues that all actors in the global arena are faced with choices - governments, individuals, firms, and NGO's.  What I want to stress is Helleiner's point that political, economic and social choices are *always* involved when making any policy. The effects of liberalization can be debated but it is clear that its effects are not equal in all places and at all times. Helleiner concludes with a call to make globalization functional, to 'civilize' it. (For more on normative aspects see Brown 2002)

Another encouraging sign was when the commission on global governance in 1995 showed that the world was united on the idea that it should take greater collective responsibility in areas such as security, not just military but in economic and social terms as well, on sustainable development, the promotion of democracy, human rights, and humanitarian action (Muldoon 2004: 3). Even though it is nearly ten years since the commission's findings this as the direction today's global governance is heading.

As I mentioned earlier the UN is undergoing many changes. NGO's and civil society organizations (CSO) are helping frame problems together with other international governmental bodies. They have much easier access to international conferences and for example have significant roles to play in the steering committee on Sustainable Development, and joint programmes on AIDS.The United Nation Development Programme also has civil society programmes specifically designed to improve UN-civil society relations.

The National Slum Dwellers Federation and its partners for example, have already helped re-design funding and loans for slum redevelopment projects in the World Bank and US AID, as well as public housing policies in their own countries. They have been successful in moving towards greater equity and participation of the urban poor in the design and implementation of these programmes (Patel et. al. 2001: 4). This is a significant achievement even though their influence was partly due to the large numbers these federations represented. They also provided innovative data they had collected themselves to back their recommendations.    What is important is the fact that international debates cannot be held inside or outside the UN without the participation of NGO's. (Van Rooy 2004: 20-22)


**3. 2. 3. Legitimacy**


I also want to briefly talk about the democratic deficit- lack of transparency, participation, and legitimacy in global agents, which is a concern many share especially SDI and the Alliance. (See Knight eds. 2002) This can be seen in all of their policy papers. The basic challenge is to address this democratic deficit in the very governing institutions and organizations. As Keohane and Nye (2001), describe it, "in the long voyage from voter to member of parliament, party, cabinet, parliament, supra-parliament, and intergovernmental organizations, the distance between the individual and what is done on her behalf on the international stage is even greater."

The key difference is that the Alliance attempts to move from the representation of the poor to their practical participation. I will go through this in more detail later.

Helleiner uses the example of business lobbyists that have the ability to influence negotiation processes significantly to draw attention to the lack of transparency. Their activities are not transparent although they are formally legal. However, now it useful to remember that in terms of levels of transparency and participation in the UN and its specialized agencies seen today, would have been hard to imagine not long ago. Even though they are far from being perfect, the fact that there is any illustrates the need for some form of civic-governance collaboration. These changes are likely to continue in the future as political processes and resistance on the streets continue to compel reform. (Helleiner 2001: 66-7)

Scholte gives a few examples of how of the democratic deficit and how citizens are unable to have much say in what goes on globally. For one, people have lack of control. Even democratic states cannot control everything that affects its people such as AIDS, cross-boarder air pollution, global warming, desertification, smuggling and trafficking etc. All these require action that is beyond the reach of an accountable government. There is also lack of consultation on international issues and governments never have referenda on such matters. There is also no global representation since the international bodies governments belong to are not democratic. The G-8 members make up 10% of the worlds population yet it is highly influential affecting all. A third of the WTO membership doesn't have permanent representation and in the IMF and World Banks five largest shareholders have 40% of the vote. And finally many formal decisions happen outside even these institutions, often by technocrats who have no public accountability. (Sholte 2001: 12-14) To Realists global governance should not be expected to be democratic since international institutions are seen as instruments that states use to achieve something. Domestic standards of democracy are not appropriate (Keohane & Nye 2001:2).

Due to the growing complexity of global issues and due to the rise in various levels of networks which bind civil society and business into the global governance process further complicates the legitimacy issue. These are transgovernmental networks, transnational networks, and trisectoral networks which include business and NGO's. They are all important in coordinating the work of experts and other agents within governments, international organizations, business and NGO sector.

They help in setting policy agendas, share information, make rules, and help in implementing programmes. (Held & McGrew 2002: 71)

### 3. 2. 4. Global Participation & the Alliance

The general strategic goal for the Alliance is to explore, expand and deepen the space for organisations of the poor to participate in the ongoing debate on civil society globally. They argue that locally as well as globally, the realm of civil society is presently occupied by NGOs and other groups who speak on behalf of the poor. The participation of the poor themselves which SDI propagates will "transform this space, changing the nature of the discussion and offering new and strategic opportunities to further the interests of local grassroots organisations" (Patel et. al. 2001: 9).

The alliance's commitment to the transnational community to community exchange process, which I briefly mentioned earlier, emerges from its understanding of community participation.  Here I want to go through in more detail what this participation I have talked about means in practice for the Alliance.

All three partners of the alliance believe that "there can be no social change that is to the benefit of low-income communities if the poor are not participated in designing, managing and realising that process of change.  Community involvement in conceptualising participation is as important as the participation itself" (Patel et. al 2001: 3).  They believe that central to this learning has been the process of community to community exchange. Here is a description of the way that SPARC sees their community exchange programme and its significance.

> The exchange process builds upon the logic of 'doing is knowing'.  Exchanges lead to good sharing of experience and therefore a new set of people learning new skills....  Exchanges between communities have been continually developed because they serve many ends.  They draw large numbers of people into a process of change and help to enable the poor to reach out and federate, thereby developing a collective vision.  In addition, they help to create personalised and strong bonds between communities who share common problems, both presenting them with a wide range of options to choose from and negotiate for, and ensuring them they are not alone in their struggles. (Patel et.al 2001: 5)

The rational the Alliance uses is that in situations where professionals are the agents of change, learning is taken away from the community, or is never invested within it. They argue that most rituals of "participation" actually seek to ensure the consensus of the group to the ideas suggested by the professionals. Communities are therefore unable to advance their own strategies and approaches to address their own problems and are unable to create genuine networks of poor urban communities that

can have a voice in affairs affecting them. For the Alliance the community to community exchanges allow for an alternative understanding to develop and become established.

> Exchanges start by encouraging communities to reflect on their own situation. Together neighbours identify their problems and explore what solutions are possible, they then either visit a group closely or invite them to their own settlement. Within the city, these exchanges occur rapidly and informally. For the first few visits, they are facilitated by the more experienced core trainers of the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan, then people organise their own exchanges. Gradually, groups visit each other spontaneously. Two types of exchanges occur, in one, core trainers travel to assist city level groups, in the other, local community leaders, now confident and capable, visit other nearby settlements. (Patel et. al. 2001: 8)

Most of these exchanges involve groups of four to five women and two men. Often this process means that families are encouraged to allow women to travel while others take care of their chores and support the household. This provides the opportunity for many women to travel away from their families for the first time, to visit cities (and now countries) they could never have gone to, and to begin an interaction with others they could never have been considered in the past. The more they talk about their own growth, the more they are aware of this, the more confidently they speak, and the greater their capacity to be role models to others. (Mitlin et. al. 2001:5)

Members of recently organised communities meet leaders and/or visit established community organisations. They share their experience and frustrations and began a process of assisting the new settlement organisations. Since all learning is by observing and participating, new leaders accompanied seasoned ones to visit nearby settlements and began to dialogue with one another's communities. Often emergent groups make a commitment to the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* and establish local groups.

Once communication systems are well developed, problem solving, pilot projects, exhibitions, enumeration and other activities begin. In all instances, there are rituals and routines that communities undertake to address long-established dependencies. Community leaders have to learn to feel comfortable about participating in change. They learn about being patient and to position themselves within larger-scale development processes in a manner that enables them to drive it. They learn to accept the support offered by more experienced groups, knowing that one day they will help someone else. (Ibid)

We can conclude this section on participation by saying that with the lack of political leadership it may seem overwhelmingly challenging to imagine a new world order emerging - one where there are appropriate institutions and legal requirements

and one where political processes are effective and legitimate - political processes which are participatory and fair. The model SDI is putting forward is firmly part of this general process. I was surprised at the number of practical proposals put forward by people, academics, civil society organizations that address just such issues -making the global governance system work more justly and efficiently. (See for example Helleiner 2001; Van Rooy 2004; Slaughter 2004; Muldoon 2004; Casaburi 2000)

## 3. 3. GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

I will now generally address some issues surrounding the notion of global or transnational civil society which I believe is necessary to be able to further understand the function of SDI and the interrelated link between the local and global through grassroots globalizing networks.

### 3. 3. 1. Conceptualizing Civil Society

In order to understanding the crucial characteristics of global civil society I need to briefly look at the idea of civil society itself. Defining civil society is not an easy task and many authors have spent a lot of time trying to come up with the best definition but this problematic is not my main concern (see for example Keane 2003, Van Rooy 1998, Seligman 2000, Chandhoke 2001).
To give just one, Lehning defines civil society as:

> [A] space or arena between households and the state which affords possibilities of concerted action and social self organization…Civil society occupies the middle ground between government and the private sector. It is the space we occupy when we are engaged neither in government activities (voting, paying taxes) nor in  commerce  (working,  producing,  shopping, consuming)…it is a voluntary realm  devoted to public good…it aims at finding common ground (Lehning 1998:28).

Even with such an apparently clear definition there is much which is left to interpretation. Basically there are three large criteria which are commonly used to define civil society: location, organization, and inspiration. Civil society was an important term used in the 19th century debates on capitalism, and was also important with Gramsci and early Marxist thinkers, and also when attempting to explain the ending of the cold war. It has also been important when explain the 'third wave' of democratisation in the third world. Basically it has become seen 'as a place

of constellation of actors occupying that space which is distinct from the state and the market' (Van Rooy 2004: 6).

Civil society is also usually defined as a place of organizations. The difficulty, of course, is what constitutes and organization? Should political parties and business councils and tribes be included? How much organization is needed to qualify as civil society? Lastly, civil society is almost always associated with its inspiration - or the altruist moral aspect. It is described in terms of its ethical foundations to better humankind. A common problem with this is the fact that civil society everywhere covers the whole scope from good to bad and is political in its very nature. When talking about legitimacy later the claim of civil society as being for the 'common good' becomes important. (Van Rooy 2004: 8-9)

## 3. 3. 2. Role – democracy, social capital, social justice

Very generally speaking civil society is seen as being important because it is intricately linked with notions of democracy, social capital, and social justice. In terms of democracy it provides a means for expressing and actively addressing the complex needs of society. It encourages citizen to become active instead of wholly depending on the state. It claims to promote pluralism and diversity in society by protecting and strengthening cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other identities. It argues to provide alternatives to state agencies in providing services to its citizens. And finally it is seen as establishing mechanisms by which governments and the market can be held accountable. Largely thanks to Putnam, civil society is associated with social capital, meaning that levels of community trust and goodwill are increased which improves general well being as well as advances the economy. And last of all it is seen as providing social justice by distributing power and wealth more equally. Globally active civil society organizations are important in this respect.[2]

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[2] Despite the obvious difficulties in providing data on how many civil society organization (CSO)  some attempts have been made. I found numbers which have been collected by the Union of International Associations. In 2002 for example they recorded some 38, 000 international NGO associations; 1,050 intercontinental associations; 4,100 regional organizations and networks; 850 transnational religious orders; 2,700 semi-autonomous international bodies and another 4,500 other internationally oriented national organizations (UIA 2002; also see Global Civil Society Yearbooks 2001-03). Finding any numbers of these types of organizations within countries is very difficult. India for example is estimated to have 70,000 development NGO's alone (Tandon & Mohanty 2000).

These large numbers become much smaller if one only looks at CSO that are involved in so called transnational social movements - ones involved in, say, human rights, peace, women's rights, environmental issues or world order, international law, in development or empowerment. Many of these organizations have evolved from missions that have at some point started to include secular humanitarian and solidarity work to their agendas. (Iriye 2002: 128)

It is useful furthermore to add some of Clark's thoughts. He describes global civil society organizations as those that address political issues that are largely ignored by the majority. They also address issues that are truly global and which concern large scale differences in power. According to him they mainly have three goals: to influence public policy, reform institutions, and change public attitudes. Their strategies are mass campaigning and the use of mass media to demonstrate force and change attitudes. They also use research and advocacy to challenge intellectuals and policy makers. They constitute global movements by seeking to create networks which would increase their legitimacy. They furthermore strive to promote simultaneous action at the local, national and global level. (Clark 2003)

## 3. 4.  TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

### 3. 4. 1. Characteristics

One of the characteristics used to describe globalization movements is their horizontal character. These movements have no permanent leaders, the have no strategy that would form a united front, and more generally they have 'loose' organizational structures even though these movements could be internally hierarchically organized. Different kinds of Social forums and issue networks would be good examples. Issue networks often do have more permanent leadership, offices and publications. Traditionally many globally like minded organizations have gathered around the United Nations but recently alternative forums have become increasingly popular. Scholte comments on the third World Social Forum in Mumbai, 'Never before had so many citizens come forth for meetings on a global scale' (Scholte 2003).

The internet has provided a meeting place that is perfectly suited to the dynamics of these networks. Some argue that without it some events or movements would not have been possible such as Seattle or the Zapatista (See Castells 1997). Van Rooy uses an example of negotiators saying something sensitive and it being on the internet within the hour for the world to judge.

What is an important characteristic of these movements is their global focus. To achieve this Civil Society Organizations try to change the assumptions by which the public and decision makers understand global issues. They also try to change specific policies and practices of global institutions and advocate reform. The current acceptance of universal human rights or changes in attitudes towards large dams are examples of changes in assumptions -or what Van Rooy calls 'frames' (See for example Routledge 2001; Van Rooy 2004). There are many other examples such as women's rights, labour rights, and environmental norms that are hugely contested and debated today.

## 3. 4. 2. Objectives

CSO's usually attempt to achieve one of three things: reform, complete disruption, or re- invention of global institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the world Trade Organization. They have been much less successful at doing this as participating in UN initiatives although there are some signs of frame change like the setting up of NGO liaison units at the World Bank and IMF. The World Bank has also set up guidelines for participation, and the WTO has formal policies on its relationship with NGO's. (ibid) The fact that language such as civil society and participation is being used is an indication of change in attitudes towards citizen participation (Kitching 2001: 9).

Street protests are probably the most visible tactics used by the globalization movements. These demonstrations are outside tactics but there are also other methods used at the same time such as consultations, research methods and face to face meetings which are called insider strategy. Friction often occurs between activists on what types of tactics to use. Vandalism and violence during large scale street protests, throwing stones and bottles, has been seen by many as completely counter productive. (Routledge 2001)

The Global Civil Society Yearbook (2001) categorizes at least four general responses to globalization: rejectionist, supportive, reformative, and alternative. The reformers are largely NGO's from the northern countries who identify themselves as 'global civil society' who seek to make global institutions more responsive to the poor. The regectionist or confrontationalits reject such instituting completely and try to

create alternative autonomous spaces for their communities. A third category of transnational resisters would be part of new social movements struggling with gender discrimination, poverty, environmental degradation attempting to carry their struggles across boarders. This kind of diversity creates different responses on the street but rather than being seen as a weakness, this diversity is seen as strength. (Keane 2003:40)

### 3. 4. 3. The Alliance & Slum Dwellers International

The Alliance in Mumbai fits into the third category of transnational resisters that is part of the broader struggle of new social movements against poverty and marginalization. The process of these grassroots exchanges began in the mid 80's with links being formed between federations of the poor in South Africa, India and Thailand. As mentioned earlier these exchanges consist of visits by groups of slum/shack dwellers to each others settlements. They share and receive advice from each other and are sometimes involved in projects that are going on. The also share tactics and strategies and more generally they share life experiences and social interactions.

The idea is that by "visiting and hosting other activists concerned with similar problems, communities gain a comparative perspective and provide a measure of external legitimation for local efforts" (Appadurai 2001: 20). Activist-leaders who might be struggling for recognition and space in their own localities may sometimes get media and state attention for their local struggles because of hosting of visitors, especially as they are part of some international network funded by important donors such as the World Bank, development ministries, from the west. New ideas are often easier to bring forth and get accepted by local politician when brought by strangers rather than local activists.

The meetings which are possible between key leaders in Mumbai, Thailand and Cape Town through these exchanges are important as they speed up the process of making strategic plans, funding, and capacity building. This is important for the leadership of SDI as their main concern is the scaling up of these processes. To achieve this SDI is thinking of ways to build a large transnational funding mechanism which would reduce their dependence on existing multilateral and private funding sources and free them from the agendas of projects, donors, states and other actors. This vision to create a world-wide fund controlled by a pro-poor activist network is

important in setting long term goals and agendas of the international network. Appadurai comments, "[this objective] is the logical extension of a politics of patience combined with a politics of visibility and a politics of self-empowerment…it is directly pitched against the politics of charity, of training and of projectization as solutions to the problems of urban poverty" (Appadurai 2001: 15).

In their concept paper for the conference on Globalization North/South Social Movements (2001), Patel, Mitlin, and Bolnick provide the strategic benefits for community exchanges and so I wish to summarize some of their main arguments. The Alliance argues that there are many benefits to international exchanges. For example they take community leaders out of their familiar environment and, in so doing, open up the assumptions and premises that they have. Often there is no solution within their present perspective. To find a solution, they need to view the problem differently. International exchanges offer a supportive and changing environment for this challenge.

When the local communities manage exchanges, and the events associated with them, they push forward the development of local capacity. An important part of organisational capability is the ability to plan and manage. International community exchanges add a new dimension to the capacity of already experienced communities. The Alliance sees the provision of new opportunities to stretch the existing capacity of active groups is important for their growth.

Community leaders often have to deal with guests that the city officials or NGOs bring to visit their settlements but in such visits they are passive observers. With an international exchange, the host community reverses the role; they create the wave of excitement, they call the press and TV and they give their officials and local dignitaries a chance to meet these outsiders. Such activities catalyse the host community by opening up new opportunities and prompting local government and service providers to respond more effectively to their needs. Moreover, they give a particular advantage to the negotiating position of the local organisation.

In addition to the immediate benefits within the neighbourhoods participating in the exchange programme, there are citywide and countrywide benefits. Membership provides communities with a feeling of ownership over the Federation and a consciousness of being a part of a much larger collective. The learning process initiated at the community-specific level reduces their sense of marginalization. The exchange process reduces their isolation. A sense of togetherness helps them to

develop confidence and determination to seek out city officials, government departments and other resource-providing organisations.

Without city wide federations, communities are generally not represented in city decision-making and they lack a voice in city affairs. The Federation consciousness further empowers communities to take charge of their lives demand entitlements and find solutions to the problems they face. An important benefit of exchanges is to empower poor communities and to work towards more democratic local governance. Exchanges between different cities and countries create a growing solidarity and sharing of experience between poor urban communities on an international scale.

# 4. ANALYSIS – Foundations for Global Participation

## 4. 1. THE ALLIANCE IN MUMBAI

In this final section I want to shift the perspective to Mumbai and the radically local, particular context the Alliance conducts its work. I will look at the politics, tactics and strategies it uses that lay the foundation for the experiences and knowledge shared internationally though the community to community exchanges.

In the late nineteenth century Mumbai had become the most important commercial centre of British India. During the interwar years the demand for textiles made Mumbai the centre of economic activity. After independence the city continued to represent opportunity, modernity and economic power. It became depicted as the city of moral corruption and material temptation. Mumbai has always stirred strong emotions because of its vast contradictions and unevenness. In the era of globalization the tensions between the global flows of capital and overwhelming poverty has only increased;  between the cosmopolitanism and growing ethnic and religious intolerance as well as the notions of democracy and social justice and the governments indifference towards the marginalized.

Approximately 40% of Mumbai's population live in slums with another 5-10% on pavements. As mentioned earlier, the great issue at stake is that even though they make up such a large part or the urban population the slum-dwellers occupy only 8% of the city's land, altogether around 43,000 hectares. The rest is made up of middle and high income housing, industrial land or land that is vacant controlled by the city, the state (regional and federal) and private owners. (Appadurai 2001: 3)

The slum-dwellers usually work at the lowest end of the white collar, industrial and manufacturing sectors and are a vital part of Mumbai's work force. These positions are almost always on daily-wage and often physically dangerous or socially degrading. For example as cart-pullers, rag-pickers, restaurant-scullions, sex-workers, car-cleaners, mechanic's  assistants, petty-vendors, small time criminals, temporary industrial workers which requires dangerous physical work like ditch-digging, metal-hammering, truck-loading, etc. These workers are usually men although women and children work whenever possible. (Sandeep 1995: 5)

For the slum dwellers there are numerous forms of daily threats which they must face. For example slumlords may force them to leave though extortion or the yearly monsoon rains may wash away their shelters. The slum dwellers have no access to doctors which becomes a vital issue since they don't have access to proper sanitary facilities which increases this need. What becomes a critical factor is that it is impossible for them to claim their rights to municipal health and education facilities, ration cards or police protection or even voting rights, since ration cards, electricity bills, and rent receipts are documents necessary for the benefits of citizenship. Therefore the inability to secure permanent housing status contributes and reinforces the slum-dwellers invisibility and marginalization. Historically the only way the state approaches them is by dislocating them, by demolishing their hutments, by demonising them, and by keeping them away from its network of entitlement and rights.

## 4. 1. 1. Strategies

As mentioned in the introduction SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan, together call themselves the Alliance. One of the main reasons for choosing the Alliance is because it is the most visible and influential NGO working among the urban poor in Mumbai and also clearly has the most extensive networks throughout India and internationally. In terms of membership SPARC also is one of the largest.

SPARC is led by professionals with an Anglophone background and therefore has strong connections to global funding sources and networking opportunities. It also has elite connections in Mumbai and elsewhere. However, all three organizations were formed in specific contexts which can be seen in their alternate functions and strategies. In 1984 SPARC was working among the poor women in the E Ward of Byculla district which is located in the difficult slums of central and North Mumbai just above the wealthy areas of South Mumbai. Among these were women who had worked in the sex trades whom were mostly Muslim and who later formed the core of Mahila Milan in 1986. The link with NSDF and its leader A. Jockin who has a slum background himself and is a charismatic leader and activist with a distinct style of grassroots political organization was made in the late 1980's.

In very rough terms SPARC brought technical knowledge and connection internationally and to the local state authorities and private sector while Mahila Milan brought the local experience of the poor women in dealing with the various actors on

the ground such as the police, the authorities, slum lords, and real estate developers. (Mitlin et. al. 2001: 8)

Even though the three partners have different backgrounds and strategies they have agreed on a partnership which is built on a distinct ideology of risk, trust, negotiation, and learning. Instead of the model of outsiders coming and teaching the local communities how to hold the government accountable to its obligations the alliance represents a radical approach which builds on what the poor themselves already know. This approach is different to the social work, community organization models usually adopted. One of the underlying thoughts is that no one knows more about how to survive poverty than the poor themselves (Mitlin 2001: 12).

The main goal and function of the alliance is to acquire security for the slum dwellers. This covers gaining adequate and lasting housing, as well as gaining access to other urban infrastructure such as essential ration cards, electricity, transport, sanitation, and other services from which they are often deprived of.

The Alliance has agreed on a strategy of pro poor activism that consciously differs from previous models of social work and community organization. Appadurai describes it as, "a radical approach to the politicization of the urban poor which is fundamentally populist and anti-expert in strategy and flavour" (Appadurai 2001: 3). It is different to the whole idea of an outside organizer who teaches local communities how to hold the state to its normative obligations to the poor. Instead the Alliance emphasis on methods of organization, mobilization, teaching and learning which build on what the poor themselves know and understand. There is a strong sense that the poor often fail because they do not know how to exploit their numbers, their knowledge and their potential for large-scale mobilization as citizens. Their model is based on teaching and learning, where the goal is for the poor to own as much as possible of the expertise that is necessary to claim, secure and consolidate basic rights in urban housing. (Appadurai 2001: 4)

The Alliance also does not politicize the poor as potential voters to any political party. This neutrality is difficult as historically grassroots organizations in Mumbai have affiliated with political parties and many such as the Shiva Sena do not tolerate neutrality. The alliance has chosen to work with whoever is in power at any level from the state to the municipal sub units called wards. Working with Shiva Sena where this has been necessary has created friction for the Alliance with other activist groups even though they reassure that they make political parties work for their end and not otherwise.

The clear advantage of this strategy is to seem non political while having the potential political power of half of Mumbai's population. Instead, the Alliance has developed a complex political relationship with various levels and forms of state bureaucracy. This includes its national civil servants who execute state policy at the highest level and run the major bodies responsible for housing loans, slum rehabilitation, real estate regulation and the like. Members of the Alliance have also developed complex links to the semi-autonomous arms of the federal government such as the Railways, the Port Authority, the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport and to municipal authorities who control critical aspects of infrastructure, such as regulations concerning illegal structures, water-supply, sanitation and licensing of residential structures.

The Alliance also works to maintain a warm relationship with the Mumbai police and at least a hands-off relationship with the underworld, which is deeply involved in the housing market, slum land lording and extortion, as well as demolition and rebuilding of temporary structures. (Appadurai 2001: 9)

This strategic approach is grounded in a complex political vision about means, ends and styles which is based on a series of ideas about the transformation of the conditions of poverty by the poor in the long run - an idea of patience and of cumulative victories and long-term asset building. This differs from the 'project' models on urban change depicted by most donors, the World Bank, as well as the Indian state. As Appadurai explains the Allaince believes that the mobilization of the knowledge of the poor into methods driven by the poor and for the poor is a slow and risk-laden process. (see Mitlin 2001)

This means that there are many tensions within the alliance about the different strategies and methods of partnership. There are differing views on the state, the market as well as the donor community and every new opportunities of funding or partnerships must be negotiated within the Alliance where views are engrained in deep diversities in class, experience, and personal style.

This style of organization and management produces constant tensions among members of the Alliance and various outside bodies, donors, state institutions and regulators, which frequently demand more formal norms of organization, accounting, and reporting. To a very considerable extent the brunt of this stress is borne by SPARC, which has an office in Central Mumbai where the formal bureaucratic links to the world of law, accountancy, and reporting are largely centralized. This office serves partly to insulate the other two partners, NSDF and Mahila Milan, from the

needs of externally mandated book-keeping, fund management, reporting and public legal procedures.

The idea of federation, or to federate, is one of the central conceptions for the Alliance. The basic idea is one of individuals and families "self-organizing as members of a political collective to pool resources, organize lobbying, provide mutual risk-management devices and confront opponents, when necessary" (Appadurai 2000: 6). It is an organization which presses for political union among existing agents. Therefore federating and not just uniting or joining. Appadurai further explains that the idea acts as a reminder that groups, families, have chosen to combine their forces as well. The power of the alliance therefore does not lie in donors, technical knowledge or the administration but in the will to federate. The poor are driving their politics no matter how much others may help them in doing so. The question is that are they driving their politics out of motives the Alliance believes?

Savings is another term which has a powerful ideological meaning for the Alliance. Better known as micro-credit, it is renowned for improving financial citizenship for the poor but for the Alliance it is seen as the foundation on which every other activity can be built. Savings is intricately linked to federation and therefore has meaning beyond the ability to meet monetary needs and be able to share resources. It is seen as a way of life like a moral discipline. The Alliance believes this builds commitment to the collective and political strength as well as creating individuals capable of managing their affairs in other areas as well. (Mitlin 2005: 3)

The Alliance also attempts to put the poor women at the foundation of what they do in other areas by putting savings at the bases of the politics of the Alliance. For third partner of the Alliance, Mahila Milan, small saving circles are what they are mainly concerned with.

> Without poor women joining together, there can be no savings. Without savings, there can be no federating. Without federating, there is no way for the poor to drive changes themselves in the arrangements that disempowers them. Thus "savings" is an ethical principle which forms the practical and moral core of the politics of patience, since it does not generate large resources quickly. (Appadurai 2001: 10)

One successful strategy of the Alliance has been to acquire the knowledge and ability to carry out self surveys. This has given them increasing power in their interactions with local and central State organizations and also with multilateral agencies. This kind of knowledge is particularly important in Mumbai where a host of agents have the mandate to deal with the slum dwellers but do not have sufficient

knowledge of exactly who the slum dwellers are, how they make their living, how long have they been in Mumbai and how they should be identified.

All of the slum policies of the state have an abstract slum population as their target and no knowledge of its concrete, human components. Buy making them statistically visible, the Alliance controls a central part of any actual policy process which is sometimes vitally important as tenure as well as rehabilitation for slum dwellers is tied to the date on which they demonstrate their demonstrate their occupancy of that particular piece of land.

I have sought to summarize some of the key strategies the Alliance uses in Mumbai as they view them to be successful.  Later I will show how I believe some of these strategies like housing festivals and precedent setting fail to take into account the deep-seated, established power relations between the Alliance and the slum dwellers, as well the Alliance and the relevant government officials.


## 4. 1. 2. Demolitions - History


The first time the issue of the slum and pavement dwellers really came into public view was in the early 80's when the government of Maharashtra undertook a large-scale demolition campaign.  It was called 'operation eviction' and exposed the governments' anti-poor character and the crucial issue of shelter. The campaign was put on hold when a stay order was obtained from the Bombay high court against the demolition of slums including the hutments on the pavements. This was achieved through the efforts of social activists to mobilize and organise protests. The Bombay Municipal Corporation did challenge the order of the High Court in the Supreme Court of India in 1983 whose verdict became a turning point.

The Supreme Court's judgement on the pavement dwellers is considered an ambiguous one. On the one hand the judgement permitted the demolition of pavement dwellings in Mumbai and on the other hand it recognized the intensity of the problems faced by the pavement dwellers. The petitioner on behalf of the pavement dwellers argued that eviction of these people would deprive them of their livelihood. But the argument concerning the right to life and livelihood by invoking article 21 of the Indian Constitution did not prove sufficiently effective. Instead of creatively interpreting this article the Court merely focussed on the reasonableness of its application. The Court clearly saw that the pavement dwellers chose "a pavement or a slum in the vicinity of their place of work, the time otherwise taken in commuting

and its costs being forbidding for their slender means. To lose the pavement or the slum [is] to lose the job". Yet the Court pronounced that the removal of 'encroachers' from the footpaths or pavements could not be regarded as 'unreasonable, unfair and unjust'. (Mohapatra 2000: 12-13)

The petitioners also argued that the pavement dwellers should not be treated as 'trespassers' as argued by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It was further argued that the pavement dwellers had a right to use the footpath for living as the pedestrian had a right to use it for walking and so on. The parity between the pavement dwellers and the pedestrians was also rejected by the Supreme Court. According to the judgement, "footpaths or pavements are public properties which are intended to serve the convenience of the *general public*. They are not laid for *private use*. If used for private purpose, they frustrate the very object for which they are carved out from portions of public streets". (Mohapatra 2000: 14)

In 1995, a decade after the supreme courts judgment the state of Maharashtra formed a study group to look into the issues of slum rehabilitation in Mumbai. The findings, known as *Afzulpurkar* report[3] were compiled involving eighteen members, civil servants, architects, engineers, NGO representative, property developers and bankers. According to the recommendation of the group those who are living in slums (including on pavements) before January 1995 will be eligible for free housing in Mumbai. The group further recommended that the electoral rolls of January 1995 be considered as the evidence for eligibility.

The main propositions put forth by the study where that:
 1. All people living in slums and pavement settlements as of January 1995 are eligible to be apart of Slum Redevelopment Scheme.
2. Pavement dwellers are fully eligible and will be relocated on nearby vacant land.
3. Legal title (long-term lease) of the land will not be transferred to individuals, but to cooperative societies and organizations of slum dwellers.
4. All households will be allotted 225 square-foot units, free of cost.
5. One unit per existing household no matter how many people live in existing household.
6. As far as possible slum dwellers will be rehabilitated on existing site.

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[3] Report of the Study group appointed by the Government of Maharashtra for the Rehabilitation of     Slum and Hutment dwellers through Reconstruction (1995)

7. If rehabilitation on site is not possible, then new sites must be within ten kilometers of existing slum.

8. Redevelopment schemes will move ahead as long as at least 70% of the households in a slum agree to participate in them.

(*Afzulpurkar* report (1995) cit. Mohapatra 2000: 19-20)

The study group also recommended the participation of the slum/pavement dwellers in the process of rehabilitation and redevelopment. The role of NGOs was also stressed. There is no doubt that this occasioned a significant turn in the policy of the state towards the pavement dwellers in the city. The recognition of pavement dwellers' specific needs also gave a new impetus to the collective mobilization of groups in the area of shelter. Finally, at least in the realm of policy if not in actual practice, pavement dwellers' distinct identity was acknowledged. The acceptance of the report by the state led to a series of discussions, debates and follow-ups.

In the following chapters I will analyze the role of the Alliance in light of Scott's theory on domination and infrapolitics. Accepting some of the functions of the Alliance, such as festivals, at their face value can be misleading. There is a lot more behind the official story and in the driving forces of the social interactions between the Alliance and the slum dwellers.

## 4. 2. POLITICS OF THE ALLIANCE & HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS

I hope the global issues looked at in chapter 3 will be kept in mind when contemplating my analysis in this chapter. The intended critique of the work of the Alliance, and dominant – subordinate relations, often *forms the foundations of legitimacy at global forums*. Rather than being genuine, authentic views, I believe this international voice becomes fissured, or tainted, filled with complex priorities and motives.

## 4. 2. 1. Public Performances

The public performance of the slum dwellers will typically reflect and appeal to the expectations of the more powerful. This could be from fear, prudence or from the desire to gain favours. Following from Scott, it is safe to say that the public social interactions of the slum dwellers reflect only part of their opinions. The powerful of course do suspect the 'performances' of the subordinate as being authentic and at times disregard them. By powerful I don't necessarily only mean the higher caste government officials, who the slum dwellers are in contact, although they no doubt are the obvious dominant forces, but I want to keep in mind civil society organizations such as the Alliance even though they work for the benefit of the poor.

Generally the lower castes are viewed as deceitful, untrustworthy, and lying by nature. As Scott's argument suggests, this public arena is one where the subordinate offer a performance of deference and consent while at the same time attempting to figure out the real intentions of the powerful. The powerful in turn do the same thing. Due to the obvious disparities in power the slum dwellers have much more to lose by not producing a performance accepted of them. This is supported by my experiences in Airoli where the women in the group interview explained their behaviour of consent and submission during the demolitions as being the wise thing to do.

As mentioned earlier, counter to this public transcript there is a complex hidden transcript that is made up of the discourse between the slum dwellers outside of the surveillance of the powerful. My assumption is clearly that there is an elaborate hidden transcript the slum dwellers are engaged in alongside their performances in public. This dramatic contrast between the public and hidden transcripts can be seen in the following extract from my group interview in Chembur:

> The government itself should be demolished. The government itself should be of the poor people. A poor government should rise up. Any government that we have seen   will   not   allow the poor people to come up in their life time. This is something that I can tell you for certain. We, the poor people are thinking that we should come forward and a poor people's leader will participate in the next elections and will have our full support. After this there will be a kingdom of poor people. Whatever political parties are ruling us at present we will pull them back or through them away from their positions. Among the poor people there is a strong demand for this. (Interview  Chembur)

This utopian upside down imagery of a kingdom of poor people rising up is not something that could have been said to the police officers conducting the demolitions or to some other powerful figure without severe consequences. Outside the interview circumstance this individual resumed the role that was expected of him, of quite obedience, which is completely different to the one seen above. From the posture

and pose with which this speech was delivered it was clear that it was not just the result of anger and lack of self control but rather a rehearsed, at least mentally, visual picture of a triumphant victory of the poor, a day of revenge, of a world turned upside down using the dominant cultural symbolism of the high castes in power such as elections, government etc. Importantly, I believe it gives us a glimpse into 'real' views, or in other words the hidden offstage discourse of the slum dwellers.

We can also note that the individual does not speak just for himself but on behalf of the whole community. It is as if this is what everybody has been conspiring and saying behind the backs of the officials. Individuals who have experienced injustice or humiliation, especially in public, would undoubtedly feel the same way. Like this speech, these views and feelings may remain unexpressed openly like many hidden transcripts, however, the communities and individuals in this particular example are united in their common caste, their fate in relation to the authorities, and their social links. Therefore I believe it is legitimate to say that this speech is a reflection and an interpretation of the collective view of the community which is commonly hidden from the public arena.

Just as this individual has compelling reasons for performing a certain expected role in public instead of delivering this speech or other acts of defiance, the powerful as well have their own reasons for putting on a 'mask' in front of the subordinate. High caste Brahmins for example may eat with the lower castes without hesitation, which would normally be considered defiling their purity, as long as this is done in private, outside of the public arena. I can also give an example while working as a development programme coordinator. There was a stark contrast between the kind of professional impression some wished to give to the local communities or even the local civil society partners we worked with and the 'offstage' discussions we engaged in privately amongst us expatriates. It felt like one was required to give a credible performance of self-importance and control in the same way as the subordinate were expected to perform in humility and respect. These points will be returned to in later discussions.

I want to move along with the idea that the hidden transcript of the slum dwellers, as well as the civil society organizations, has an impact on the public transcripts in circumstances of participation and emancipation to a far greater degree than normally expected, keeping in mind that the hidden transcripts are specific to a political and cultural context of course. The offstage discourse of the slum dwellers in Mumbai will not have similar outcomes say in South African or South American slum

communities although similarities will be there. I will clarify this thought further when discussing other non verbal speech acts such as stealing, tax evasion, shabby work for employers and other elite luxuries and privileges, bribery, tampering with paperwork etc.

As Scott explains (Scott 1990:17-45), the public transcript is more like a self portrait of the dominant elites as they would like themselves to be seen. Due to the obvious power imbalances they compel performances from the slum dwellers. Their purpose is to affirm and naturalize the power of the dominant elites and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of their rule. Alliance leaders have opted for a politics, "to work with whoever is in power at any level… with Shiva Sena where this has been necessary". (Appadurai 2000:4). It is legitimate to doubt the claim that the Alliance makes political parties work for their end and not otherwise, for example in naturalizing the power of the dominant. This tactic has the potential to only reinforce the inequalities and the subordination of the slum communities and more detrimental, it gives legitimacy for the dominant rule.

Its purpose for the Alliance of course is to work with the power disparities present in order to gain ground in the long run - to appear non political while having the potential political power of nearly half of Mumbai's population. This demonstrates the problematic position of many civil society organizations when they must perform as expected of them in relation to the governing apparatus while hoping to exploit this relationship whenever possible to further their real agenda, whatever that may be, personal or for the benefit of the slum communities. It is clearly a complex, multifaceted relationship, and one that is extremely fluid by nature. Government official are smart enough to know when it is in their benefit to participate in housing or toilet festivals organized by the Alliance, who in turn rationalizes the potential gains of inviting them. Rarely though, are the motives of the participating slum community individuals questioned who are, rhetorically at least, at the centre of things.

Strongly echoing Scott I want to claim that their participation could be seen as a form of political discourse that is making use of the flattering self image of the elites. The same way that the ideology of the White slave owners in the antebellum US south had notions of care, feeding, *housing*, and clothing of slaves. (Scott 1990: 18) Even if practices were different the slaves made use of this small rhetoric space for appeals for better food, humane treatment etc. They could claim representation in the prevailing ideology without seeming rebellious. This could be a clear incentive for the participation of the slum communities and would explain the failure of many 'buy the

poor for the poor' development initiatives. Once the public development exercise is over the participants resort back to their usual practices without striving to fulfil the goals discussed only moments ago.

## 4. 2. 2. Levels of Compliance

One of the biggest questions which troubled me while working among the slum communities in Mumbai was the level of compliance during the demolitions. This falls within the classic inquiry of hegemonic incorporation and is of course a fundamental political issue. How much can be explained by assuming that the slum communities are being socialized into accepting the dominant view of whatever the problem is and what can be done? This is not only an important question for politics but for development debates as well.

When we think about the various reasons that compel slum communities to act a certain role in the presence of the more powerful there are numerous examples in my field notes. For example the untouchables that mostly comprise the slum communities have been systematically subject to domination by the higher castes for so long that for most the inequality has become a fact of life. The public rituals of subordination which they perform have become so routine and fundamentally necessary in order to survive that children are socialized and taught the routines of conformity by their parents because their primary desire is to keep them safe and give them whatever tools are required to endure. In the end they are brought up to please or at least not anger the dominant elites.

To be successful in providing a convincing performance in the presence of the powerful would require both suppressing and controlling ones feelings. Normal encounters with dominant elites would be relatively easy since the slum dwellers would have performed these rituals countless times and the repetition would make the act seem natural and effortless.

Again, what makes this analysis complicated is that fact that these issues are intricately intertwined with each other. I realize that on the one hand we are talking about situations of apparent voluntary participation in activities less hierarchical by nature, arranged by civil society organizations compared with forced compliance with elite government policies. On the other hand we are talking about the extreme circumstance of forced evictions. I have done this on purpose in order to illustrate the

difficulty in situations such as housing festivals or numerous community development initiatives where both are meshed together.

Civil society organization such as the Alliance, especially development NGOs, must function in this precarious 'middle ground'. Mentioned earlier the Alliance's primary goal is to provide housing for slum communities and therefore it becomes a power figure in the politics of the elite. The extreme circumstance where individuals are forced to obey commands that are humiliating and degrading, such as standing by as ones home is being demolished and face ridicule would obviously be far more difficult than participating in a savings scheme.

However, even if the slum communities are compelled to perform in public the upside down imagery of the previous passage suggests that they have no trouble imagining a total reversal of circumstances, even if a change in the practiced caste discrimination would be difficult to believe. Of course the elite in Mumbai convincingly persuade the subordinate into accepting the values that justify their subordination and successfully create feelings of fatality. Quoting a woman in Chembur, "this girl sitting here is Deva. She has two children. When I will be gone what will become of her and her two children? Where will they go? What will this old man eat? How will he live? He will live like a dog and die like an insect". (Interview Chembur) This kind of inevitability is particularly relevant since the slum communities civil rights barely feature in political discourse, even at the rhetorical level. Any real criticism of the prevailing caste discrimination or any future aspirations and initiative will be largely extinguished by the belief that nothing could possibly be done to improve the current situation.

Returning back to the issue of conformity during the demolition mentioned earlier, Scott's elaboration on the necessity to choke back ones rage and conquer the impulse to respond, provides some answers. Scott: "It is a systematic frustration of reciprocal action in relations of domination which helps explain the content of the hidden transcript". (Scott 1990: 38) The power relation that is prevalent during the act of demolition and the fear of beatings, jail, humiliation, or being branded as rebellious in the future stops any impulsive retribution.

For a moment putting aside the rather extreme circumstance of the demolitions I want to elaborate a little on the relationship between the castes in India.  For the untouchables to be able to acquire vital commodities such as sugar, kerosene, grain, rice or financial loans and work, they must remain on the good side of someone from the dominant castes. We can say that they not only conform but rather actively

manipulate the common rituals of subordination for personal gains. One untouchable has been quoted saying "we must also tactfully disguise and hide, as necessary, our true aims and intentions form our social adversaries. To recommend it is not to encourage falsehood but only to be tactical in order to survive". (Khare quoted in Scott: 1990: 33)

Critics may agree with these terms but be doubtful of active manipulation in circumstances of development initiatives where inequality in not as distinct and caste segregation is actively fought against. However, I believe this line is very fluid and flexible. The extremity might not be there but this does not mean opportunities would not be exploited. I believe there is an incentive to cooperate and even appear enthusiastic if one perceives a prospect of being rewarded sometime in the future. It is part of human nature to calculate and rationalize in terms of personal gain.

The Alliance also does acknowledge this point in their work; "the poor are not exempt from greed, jealousy, and conflict and many are willing to cheat and lie in order to advance themselves in light of new opportunities". (Appadurai 2000: 13) What I want to suggest is that the hidden transcript coupled with opportunistic infrapolitcal resistance will fundamentally create a fissured subaltern voice (view) in development discourse. I believe the Alliance has not factored this into their strategies. If one agrees with me that concrete grassroots developmental advances have to a large extent failed, then the above claims can easily be agreed with. On the flip side development NGOs and other governing elites have personal gains to be made by maintaining the status quo.

### 4. 2. 3. Maintaining the Prevailing Relationship

To enlighten this further I will describe some of the background to the slums where I gathered data. There were countless stories of despair and disappointment in the outcomes of efforts to change things.  In Chembur, one of the three areas of Mumbai where I conducted interviews, the reason for migrating to Mumbai was the same as for most of the slum communities facing demolitions and evictions – in search of a better life, education for children, and employment. One of the interviewees, for example, had lived in Mumbai since '72, decades before the '95 cut off for the government's slum redevelopment scheme, yet he was facing the same threats as the rest of the community. He explained to me some of the realities they had

encountered which are experiences that take away the initial effort and belief in the use of traditional civic means for achieving social change.

The communities' relation to the dominant structures of power was seen as unjust throughout the interactions relating to the demolitions. Faced with corrupt officers many from the community had decided to move to a completely different area only to be again threatened by demolitions by the Municipality Department officer. The officials initially advised them to make a banner in protest of the demolitions expressing their wish to stay there. However, the community was willing to move voluntarily to any allotted place as long as they could then remain there. This is a common problem since often there is nowhere to go. Even after eventually allotting a few families places to stay after three years they received a notice of eviction again. During those three years they weren't provided with any of the basic amenities such as water of electricity promised to them. Any effort to discuss the allotment and eviction order with the relevant government official was quickly turned down with directions to clear the area immediately.

In Chembur, like in many slum communities, one way to avoid the demolition was by obtaining a stay order – which basically meant each family paying a certain amount and once sufficient they could collectively hire a lawyer to file a case on their behalf. Those houses which had not obtained a stay order were demolished. I want to stress the fact that often the police and officials conducting and coordinating the demolitions acted and spoke abusively, publicly showing off their strength and power.

Exploiting their constant insecurity, the struggle in Chembur depicts well the length to which the government officials are willing to go. I understand that my evidence is one sided but the testimonies of the community members, even if they are unable to be verified, are important. The community members gave details that the right to stay in that particular area was given to twenty seven houses. Yet the officials provided documents in which all the members of the community had either signed or thumb marked saying that they do not wish to stay and are willing to leave.

One of the people interviewed got very infuriated while discussing this issue, "since coming to Mumbai in '72 I have not signed a single document. Yet in these documents in six different place I can see my forged initials" (Interview Chembur). Finally the community members were taken to court and nearly half of their houses have been demolished. In this particular community it was clear that they were comparatively united in their struggles against the demolitions. Elements of the hidden transcripts would at times spill into public view for example in public acts of

defiance such as declaring that "we are Indians, we are staying here only, here only" to the municipality officers when called to move.

The community had selected few key members to go to the capital Delhi and see Ms. Sonia Gandhi about the situation. She had apparently recorded their conversations and assured them that if anyone comes and harasses them again to call her. She also promised to give money for houses and a certain amount for all the poor people in Chembur. A social activist and well know public figure Ms. Medha Patkar is fighting for the rights of the poor so they were told that they had her full support.

It is interesting to note that the tone of the conversations became more bold and outspoken once she was mentioned. She was meant to come to that particular area soon after my interview to give a rallying speech. Clearly the people were exited at this prospect. They mentioned a list of government persons whom they had spoken to who had done nothing for them. Whenever pushed to comment on what the community members had done themselves, or collaborated with other communities the answers were differed back to Medha Patkar who was now going to help them. Excitedly they told me that the poor people will come from all four sides to their area united in their fight now that a rally was being held there.

In all the three communities where I conducted my interviews there were similar stories and experiences. Geographically though, Chembur and Chira Nagar were very different. Chembur was located along the side of a busy highway while Chir Nagar was on the outskirts of Mumbai situated on a small hill which had no value for the government, according to the community. They told me of the practical struggles and trauma they have to constantly face because of the ongoing threat of demolitions. The Officials only informed community members hours before the bulldozers came forcing them to quickly run away with any valuables they could collect. Many told me that often the officials would take with them their household belongings. Sometimes they would come without warning while the husband was working and the women were home with the children and take many of their belongings.

The community in Chira Nagar had experienced yearly demolitions for the past ten years. During major campaigns to clear the city of illegal slums such as the one while I was there the community faced constant demolitions, sometimes daily.  In Airoli, the third community I worked with, the demolition squad came with four bulldozers and 4 big trucks and took away all their household belongings.

Again they came and broke our houses and again we rebuilt them and kept on staying here. There is no other place for us to go so we are staying here only. Now, nobody will give us a place to stay. This is the only place we have. Again they will come and break our houses and again we will rebuild them. (Interview Airoli)

This could be seen throughout the city once the police surveillance ended. People being forced to become onlookers while their huts are being demolished and within hours or days, depending of the area, the huts were back up just the way they were. I believe that in Airoli the major operation with numerous bulldozers and trucks was an attempt by the dominant to create a spectacle and set an example to scare people.

The demolitions are a grand display of power by the elite and not only serve to awe but maintain the prevailing relationship as well. As long as the visible symbolism of the elite repression, like openly declared threats, jailing, and bullying remains in place, the slum communities might be intimidated by an image of influence which may be out of proportion with reality. The police officers conducting the demolitions typically celebrated past acts of repression and had an extremely determined demeanour. These frequent acts therefore are enough to sustain the impression of power and any resistance will be quenched before fully surfacing and the power of the elite will remain unchallenged. The total humiliation and trauma brought by the demolitions gives a distinct psychological advantage to the elite.

Using Scott's notion of concealment I believe the demolitions can be seen as an effort by the elite to control the public stage in order to create an appearance that they want the subordinates to see. They also use euphemisms and stigmas to dampen the moral argument against the demolition. For example in the words of one of the leading English newspapers, "we are only 'cleaning up the city' of 'illegal encroachers of public land', who are 'eating away at the already strained city infrastructure'" (Times of India – Mumbai Ed.). These terms which are rarely contested do not have to explain themselves and therefore the elite have monopoly of this public knowledge. I do not wish to go into a lengthy discussion of the language used in public newspapers and documents but it is sufficient to see that it paints a picture of the dominant rule in a self-interested manner. Even though there is relative freedom of press in India the powerful elite have almost complete control to portray their rule in any way they want.

The dominant elite in Mumbai extract work, production, services, taxes and a range of conduct in a highly hierarchical manner and at times against the will of the slum dwellers. This inequality creates friction which can only be sustained by constant reinforcement, maintenance and adjustment of this relationship. It is fair to

doubt the willingness of most high castes or expatriate development workers to give up the luxury of domestic helpers for example. Few would consider this act of providing employment as actually helping to sustain and maintain dominant subordinate relations.

Maintaining this hierarchy is largely achieved by, "the symbolization of domination by demonstrations and enactments of power". (Scott 1990: 45) What this means is that every visible outward use of power, even gestures, condescending speech, public criticism, punishment etc. manifests itself to reinforce the hierarchical order. I believe that in addition to the more obvious demolitions, events such as housing exhibitions and toilet festivals do just this in a disguised manner even if their intention is quite different.

For the Alliance the purpose of organizing these housing exhibitions has been to demonstrate to the public officials as well as encourage the poor themselves to realize that they can play a key role in the building of secure housing for themselves. The alliance views it as a strategy or technique to change existing philosophies of the state, donors, and other NGOs as traditionally the design, construction and financing of housing for the slum dwellers has been assumed to be produced by experts. They hope to achieve this by attempting to create and gather all the necessary skills and knowledge in order to construct housing like negotiating with private developers, forming legal cooperatives by the poor, innovations in urban law as well as new types of arrangement between banks, donors and the poor themselves. (Hasan et. al. 2005: 14-15)

The housing exhibitions themselves are exhibits of housing models built by the poor. They are held in open, crowded places, in a carnival atmosphere which used to be popular venues for introducing industrial products as well as clothes, books and the like before shopping centres took over. These have been very popular in India combining business with fair, circuses, other temporary public events.

First of all I want to provide another extract from my interview in Chembur which I believe gives a more realistic account of expectations for the majority of slum dwellers instead of the utopian optimism of voluntary initiative found above.

> I feel that the government should provide us with all the basic facilities, convert our houses into proper cement houses, provide education for our children, as well as provide us with employment. Apart from this we are not concerned with the government. All that we want are the basic facilities. The government that will finalize a place were we can stay, a government that will help us, one who is of our people that is what we call government. That is what we want. That is our wholehearted wish. Where there is unemployment, and no house, provide them with some work and basic needs. Provide facilities for old people, make them self sufficient. They will all live like beggars. When the government asks for our vote and funds I ask what the government is doing for us. How are we benefiting from the government? No one is helping Deva or this old man. When a person is earning two rupees and there are ten people to feed how will he pay 800 rupees rent to somebody? All that we really want is that whoever is paying rent should be the final owner of the house. (Interview Chembur)

Eight hundred rupees rent is what individual families must pay when relocated to housing provided by the government. As seen from this extract this alone is viewed as highly unreasonable and unachievable. Even though the Alliance sees one of the benefits of organizing housing exhibitions as "weakening existing class cultures in India by (the poor) being on stage in public with an audience of fellow citizens, officials, NGOs, and even donors they are in fact capturing civic space…and legitimation of which they have been denied" (Mitlin et. al. 2001: 15).

I don't doubt that is some cases this could be true but the existing power, knowledge, resource inequalities within which these exhibitions take place makes these claims unlikely. For example I spoke with a local politician who explained to me that the major housing schemes organized by the government are typically so far from the location of employment where the slum dwellers must travel to daily, that ones daily wages would barely cover the cost of the required public transportation.

This is intentional so that left over units can then be sold to various elite stakeholders at bargain prices. This rampant corruption and blackmail is supported by my data;

> The local politicians approached us and literally forced us to join politics. After some time we found out that not even one political person is good. We have had to give them bribes and bribes every time. If somehow they come to know that we have rupees one or two thousand with us, they get news from their reliable sources and start demanding money for political purposes. This way they steal from us every day. The police are also involved in it. All of them work together and make money by harassing innocent people or involving them in faulty transaction. This has become a business. (Interview Chembur)

I also believe that the entire carnival atmosphere of the exhibitions with the dominant elite benefiting by "giving them a chance to be involved with the people in the locality, providing legitimacy, and popularity" will always be in a sense lopsided due to the power disparities (Mitlin et. al. 2001: 15).

I want to make the point that once coupled with the occasional demolition, it serves to establish the given state of domination is being stable, effective and here to stay, forcing participation in festivals for example. By participating, the underlying failure of the government to provide sufficient housing and serviced to the slums dwellers in the first place goes unaddressed, resulting in compliance. The need to provide shelter for ones children and make a living is motivation enough to take part. There is no other realistic alternative but to comply.

As long as the slum dwellers are unable to reliably see the hidden transcripts of the powerful they are forced to interpret the public transcript presented to them. Since "their public dissent breaks the naturalization of power made plausible by a united front", it is important that the elite regulate the public transcript and not allow members to publicly defy the regulations of the relationship like activist columns in newspapers of rallies and marches etc. (Scott 1990: 67). For this reason the political rally where a prominent activist politician was supposedly siding with the slum dwellers that took place the same day as one of our interviews created such a controversy.

The housing festivals in a way provide the elite with an opportunity to convince or reassure themselves of their high moral cause and their sympathy. I am inclined to quote Weber:

> This universal phenomenon [the belief by the privileged that their good fortune in just] is rooted in certain psychological patterns. When a man who is happy compares his position with that of one who is unhappy, he is not content with the fact of his happiness, but desires something more, namely, the right to his happiness, the consciousness that he has earned his good fortune, in contrast to the unfortunate one who must equally have earned his misfortune…What the privileged classes require, if anything at all, is this psychological reassurance of legitimacy. (Weber quoted in Scott 1990: 68)

## 4. 2. 4. Resistance

What I now wish to do is more thoroughly go through Scott's basic argument for infrapolitics – the invisible component of resistance to domination, which has already been briefly mentioned a few times. The reason infrapolitics is invisible, is because of a conscious choice to pursue a tactic or strategy that arises from an awareness of the existing power relations. Scott argues that the dominant - subordinate relationship is one were a constant, continuous struggle is underway looking for ways to exploit small advantages and weaknesses of the other. For each form of open resistance there is an infrapolitical counterpart with the same strategic goals but one

that is better adapted to resisting an opponent that would most likely win an open confrontation. (Scott 1990: 183-4)

Keeping this in mind I want to critically look at one of the fundamental strategies the Alliance uses in Mumbai to rationalize activities such as the housing and toilet festivals which are very similar. This strategy is described as 'precedent setting' by the Alliance. Basically it involves some pilot activity (or project) which offers a simple and effective solution to a problem that has to be faced by both the city and the slum dwellers. The working assumption is that the illegal activities and practices which the slum communities take part in, with a little adaptation, can be created to form the basis for testing of an intervention that improves the status quo. As these 'precedents' are then put into practice, they show senior policy makers and administrators that it is possible to do something else. (Mitlin et. al. 2000)

The Alliance also sees this kind of president setting as providing a linguistic device for negotiating between the legalities of urban government and the illegal arrangements that the poor have to make. I find this doubtful. For example the construction of illegal structures, illegal strategies, informal/illegal arrangements for water and electricity or anything else that the slum dwellers have succeeded in capturing out of the material resources of the city are dismissed and moved into a 'zone of negotiation and quasi-legality' when the slum dwellers provide ideas for tackling these issues.

This is supposed to provide the municipal officials, elite and other experts an opportunity to build on these ideas while appearing to deal with the illegal activities (Appadurai 2001: 11-14). To be clear on this point and not understood wrong, I am not suggesting that the initiative of the slum communities to come up with solutions to common problems is somehow wrong and undesired. However, for achieving long term social change I believe it would be helpful if it would be kept in mind that such situations are also functioning in a realm of resistance and domination (See table 1).

**Table 1. Domination & Resistance**

|  | Material Domination | Status Domination | Ideological Domination |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Practices of Domination** | Appropriation of grain, taxes, labour etc. | humiliation, dis-privilege, insults, assaults on dignity | justification by ruling groups for slavery, serfdom, caste, privilege |
| **Forms of Public Declared Resistance** | petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, land invasions, and open revolts | public assertion of worth by gesture, dress, speech, and/or open desecration of status symbols of the dominant | public counter ideologies propagation equality, revolution, or negation the ruling ideology |
| **Forms of Disguised, low profile, undisclosed Resistance INFRAPOLI-TICS** | everyday forms of resistance, e.g. poaching, squatting, desertion, evasion, foot-dragging Direct resistance by disguised resistors, e.g. masked appropriation, threats, anonymous threats | hidden transcript of anger, aggression, and disguised discourses of dignity e.g., rituals of aggression, tales of revenge, use of carnival symbolism, gossip, rumor, creation of autonomous social space for assertion of dignity | development of dissident subcultures e.g., millennial religions, slave "hush-arbors", fork religion, myths of social banditry and class heroes, world upside down imagery, myths of the good king etc |

The illegal acquisition of land for housing and water, for example, is seen by the slum communities as only taking what is their civic right. I believe this attitude has its foundations in the complex extraction of labour and services that the elite have done for generations.

By not performing to a level that would have been expected of them the slum community members involved in our empowerment activities for example, effectively lowered the norms of cooperation and initiative expected of them. On the other hand by praising the work that we have done during holidays and at end of year parties or celebration they surely won better terms of engagement and other perks form us. This happens at committee meetings where participants volunteer or are nominated from the slum communities to take part in certain development initiatives. It is easy to

imagine subordinate communities collectively providing a piece of theatre that serves their superior's view of the situation while maintaining their personal interests in less rigid circumstances, say in the actual communities hidden from surveillance.

The elite have also extracted symbolically by expecting certain deference, demeanour, posture, verbal formulas, and acts of humility as I have shown earlier. We must remember that the only illegal activities we can see are the ones which materialise in the public domain. I believe there are a host of subtle strategies whose purpose is to minimise this extraction which are completely hidden, especially from my data. However, hinting at many similar illegal strategies to stop the demolitions for example, the slum communities used the criminal underworld to stop the demolitions in Airoli. Even if the community was divided on the issue of staying, some preferring to wait for proper housing being provided while others opted to move on, it was in their strategic interest to pay the criminals to pay the officials to stop the demolitions. There is also a certain degree of peer pressure to persuade everyone to participate.

The point is that resistance such as this happens when any open contestation is not practical do to the realities of power. (Scott 1990: 183) However these small acts of resistance are important and do have dramatic economical and political consequences. Slow, unproductive work, not bad enough to result in punishment yet not enough to make a factory, or communist regime succeed. (See Scott 1985) Paying the criminal underworld to fight on their side, and numerous other strategies, are successful as they foul the governments plans to clean the city of illegal slums.

To illustrate this further I will use an example from Scott on how these strategies work. In eighteenth century poaching when certain practices became established, they were considered a custom. Once this custom became widespread and increased, it almost became considered a right. Villagers might have secretly torn the bark of trees just below ground level and once the tree died they could go and collect it rightfully. (Scott 1990: 195-6) Similarly, I learned that public water collection points were deliberately broken so that water could be freely collected without being charged and without having to pay since it was legal to collect water from unmanaged public water points.

This kind of resistance is constantly pressing against the limits of what is allowed. How much this happens depends on the amount of anger and resentment the subordinates feel. There is an underlying will to express themselves in public as they would in the hidden transcrips therefore limits are tested and if success is gained the situation may escalate rapidly and encourage others to go even further if

they go unnoticed. For example in our own development programmes there are examples of local employees demanding increasing amounts of power after initial responsibility is given to them, culminating in a total takeover of the programme.

Finally:

> Infrpolitics is, to be sure, real politics. In many respects it is conducted in more earnest, for higher stakes, and against greater odds than political life in liberal democracies. Real ground is lost and gained. Armies are undone and revolutions facilitated by the desertions of infrapolitics. De facto property rights are established and challenged. States confront fiscal crisis or crisis of appropriation when the cumulative petty stratagems of its subjects deny them labour and taxes. Resistant subcultures of dignity and vengeful dreams are created and nurtured. Counterhegemonic discourse is elaborated. Thus infrapolitics is, as emphasised earlier, always pressing, testing, probing the boundaries of the permissible. Any relaxation on surveillance and punishment and foot-dragging threatens to become face-to-face defiant contempt, millennial dreams threaten to become revolutionary politics. From this vantage point infrapolitics may be thought of as the elementary –in the sense of foundational-forms of politics. It is the building block for the more elaborate institutionalized political action that could not exist without it. (Scott 1990: 200-01)

## 5. CONCLUSION – Fissured Subordinate Voice

In this concluding chapter I will address some of the concerns I believe the above discussions and analysis have on globalizing issue networks and the international. As talked about throughout the study, I wish to suggest that the hidden transcripts of the slum dwellers, coupled with opportunistic infrapolitcal resistance, will subsequently create a fissured subaltern voice in the international domain. The core goal of Slum Dwellers International (SDI), of which the Alliance is part of, is to enable the poor themselves to dialogue with international development agencies and expand the space available to the poor within international institutions.

> The participation of the poor themselves will transform this space, changing the nature of the discussion and offering new and strategic opportunities to further the interests of local grassroots organisations. The general strategic goal for the Alliance is to explore, expand and deepen the space for organisations of the poor to participate in the ongoing debate on civil society globally.
> (Patel et. al. 2001: 9)

As much as I personally believe that the kind of change the Alliance and many NGOs propagate is fundamentally necessary, the prevailing divergence in the hidden transcripts of the poor and the hidden transcripts of the decision makers is currently too great. As we have seen the stark contrast between the public displays and the offstage dialogue is dramatic even in Mumbai which is only amplified internationally. These power imbalances that feed the hidden transcripts would clearly be even greater at the international level.

Encounters of participation, such as the ones described by SDI in chapter 3.4.3, would become sites where all participants attempt to utilize all arising opportunities. All parties would have different habits and practices, different goals, tactics and strategies for achieving one's own hidden transcript. Even if these circumstances are different to the ones looked at in Mumbai they would still incorporate the same inclination to maintain the status quo with similar profitability, resulting in undesirable outcomes.

As in Mumbai for example, quite simply the international actors involved have different ideas of the kind of institutional and social change desired. They also have differing ideologies concerning class/caste, gender, advocacy, and how to achieve these. The public act of accepting the participation of the poor would be tainted by

the 'hidden' motives of all actors, not just government officials but representatives of other transnational institutions, corporations, media representatives etc. Their interrelated dynamics and relationships are shaped by the fluidity of powers to dominate and opportunities to resist.

The extension of a particular local social relationship to different regional, national, and global levels means that increasingly contradictory stakeholders become involved. Parties have vast inequalities in resources, power, knowledge, and mobility. Therefore overlapping political initiatives will be present within the transnational network, between global leaders of the Alliance and local participants for example, as well as amongst separate networks all seeking global recognition, support and visibility. As we have seen there are various power relations within the actual resistance movement as well.

Of course some activist-leaders who might be struggling for recognition and space in their own localities may sometimes get media and state attention for their local struggles because of hosting visitors through the exchanges, especially as they are part of some international network funded by important donors such as the World Bank, and development ministries from the west.

Even though it might be a legitimate critique, I will not argue that the motives or hidden transcripts of the slum dwellers participating in the international exchanges should somehow be exposed, assuming their negative connotations. Yet the cross boarder travel these exchanges require is in itself a massive incentive, whatever the long term strategic goal the Alliance may have. Attached to it are significant gains in status and increases in power after returning back to ones own locality. I believe it is inappropriate to assume cooperation out of purely altruistic motives for the common good of the community from the slum dwellers when our own decisions, and choices of social networks, are shaped largely by rational calculations.

What I am critical of is the broader strategic future direction SDI hopes to reach - of a "transnational funding mechanism which will reduce our dependence on existing multilateral and private funding sources and free us from the agendas of projects, donors, states and other actors" (Mitlin 2001: 22). This is an outcome that is in the benefit of the Alliance in the first instance. Instead of its benefits trickling down in the long run to the slum dwellers I would argue that much of them would serve to maintain the dominant – subordinate relationship both parties are used to.

By choosing a political strategy of partnerships, civil society organizations such as the Alliance run the risk of gaining little, from the vantage point of the marginalized, and rather maintaining the exiting power relations. As we have seen it would be considerably difficult to read the hidden motives of all the partners. Often it would require an assumption that they have some moral goals in common. I am not saying that the mobilization of certain groups which the Alliance has been able to do in Mumbai would be better off used as political capital or in mass demonstrations and rallies of unity to force social change even if history supports dramatic, far reaching social change as being achieved by these methods.

What underlies every strategy the Alliance supports is a belief that the poor are the best managers of solutions to the problems of poverty. This is a complex claim and it is not my intention to begin suggesting anything based on the findings of this thesis. However, this is something that the Alliance must convince the governing apparatus of Mumbai to believe in, various multilateral agencies, Northern funders, as well as Southern governments. This is a task of persuading individuals to change deep rooted hidden transcripts – both of the elite as well as the subordinate. All of this in a context and situation where both parties have some stake in maintain the status quo and some gain to be made by appearing to have changed attitudes. Of course this is not expected without the poor being mobilized and empowered as the Alliance suggests.

With regards to the possibility of some kind of new design for global governance which mediates the dynamics of globalization, the powers of the dominant elite and the multifaceted resistance of local communities involved in their own infrapolitical struggles I am reluctant to sound as optimistic as many others. After this exploration into the mediating role civil society organization play I have become further convinced of the need for change in existing power relation, in deep seeded driving motivations, especially advocates in the development industry who often are the only voice subordinate groups such as the slum dwellers have. How to achieve this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

However, the analysis of the complex relationship between the dominant and the subordinate in Mumbai shows the diverging motives based on which decisions are made. Civil society organizations do have the potential to play a key role in the middle ground, as a kind of mediator. Yet by being able to align their hidden transcripts with those of the subordinate would not necessarily bring the desired outcome for common good. They would have to bring the hidden transcripts of the

subordinate and the elite closer in line with each other which is an enormously difficult challenge. I feel future research in this direction; to look deeper at NGOs adapting this mediating role, acknowledging the interrelated and often confrontational hidden agendas, would be beneficial.

There will always be individuals at all levels of the power spectrum, who believe in the right thing, and are willing to unconditionally act and make decisions based on these. For lasting change these individuals need to be utilized.

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# APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of the Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:

(a.) Describe the purpose of the study (b.) Where the Data/information is being collected (c.) What will be done with the information from the interviews (d.) How the information will be kept confidential (e.) explain the purpose of the recorder
- make sure everyone understands what has been said
- turn on the recorder and test it
- if group, make sure *everyone* tells *their* story

**QUESTIONS**:

1.      Please tell me about yourself and your family
        **Probes**: where you came from (extended family?), when? why?
         How long have you been here?

2.      Tell me about the demolition
        **Probes**: How did it happen?
        Were you aware that you homes were under threat? Were you informed beforehand?

3.      How did you/your family/others react?
         **Probes** [**FEELINGS**]: Where were you when it took place?
         (If not there who was? How did you find out?)
         What did you do? Did anyone do anything? (clarify)

4.        Have you shared your experiences with others in similar situations?
        If yes probes: How did they react, feel? (peers, solidarity?)

5.        Has anyone helped you? (If yes who? how?)
        Has anyone said that they would help you?
        <u>(Clarify: who? how? organisations/activists?)</u>

6.        Tell me about your dreams/plans for the future
        **Probes**: What do you feel your basic needs would be and how could these be met?
        (security? economic? physical?)

7.        What do you feel the government should do about your situation?
        **Probes**: What do you think is fair? (elaborate)
        <u>What is your role, responsibilities? CAUTION!)</u>